

WHAT'S GOING ON? THE NEW MARVIN GATE
America's bad boy of soul music



THE EYE

SIDS WHO DO BE THEIR MONOCENCE
When a 14-year-old is having sex



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BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE GANGSTER
All you need to know about Reggie Kray



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WHY FREZZA BLEW HIS TOP
Answer in The Box, by Pandora. Starts today

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THE INDEPENDENT

Tuesday 24 February 1998 45p No 3,542

Massive blast hits hopes for Ulster

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

The pressures and strains on the Northern Ireland peace process grew yesterday with another major republican bombing. The attack prompted warnings that an important loyalist group's ceasefire was in danger.

The bombing meant that a session of multi-party talks was once again eclipsed by events on the streets, demonstrating that groups opposed to the process are intent on using violence to sabotage it.

While Unionists immediately claimed that the IRA must have been responsible for the bombing, the authorities said they would await police reports before attributing blame. The bombings were clearly aiming for maximum political and communal disruption in choosing as their target the Co Armagh town of Portadown, which is sometimes called the Orange citadel.

It is both the home town of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, currently the most violent of the Protestant paramilitary groups, and the central town of Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble's Upper Bann constituency. It is also the venue for the annual Drumcree marching confrontation in July.

It is thus one of the most provocative targets that republicans could choose to bomb. Mark Fulton, a close associate of assassinated UVF leader Billy Wright, said: "The people in Portadown are incensed. I would say loyalists will not be amused at this."

Warnings had been given and no one was injured when a large car-bomb was set off in the centre of the town, wrecking many business premises and damaging buildings over a wide area.

A number of people had narrow escapes within minutes of the bomb going off. A pregnant woman said: "We all got out in good time but it was very frightening. I'm trying to keep calm because of the baby. We just saw this massive explosion in the building up there - it seemed like the whole thing just went up."

The attack brought a warning from Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party which speaks for the Ulster Volunteer Force. The UVF, while no saints, have been the quietest of the loyalist paramilitary outfits and the

most supportive of the peace process.

Mr Hutchinson said: "The loyalist ceasefire is under threat if these attacks continue. Political dialogue is not working. Time is running out. I think the North Armagh brigade of the Provisional IRA are at their worst."

His allegation was echoed by other Unionists, including Mr Trimble who told reporters: "I have no doubt that this is the work of the IRA. We are seeing Sinn Féin-IRA voting its spleen because it has been caught out. It has been exposed inside the process and outside the process. There can be no question now of their returning to the talks."

He strongly appealed to loyalists not to retaliate, adding: "The spotlight is on the republican movement. They're in the dock, there's no reason why any loyalist should go and join them in the dock."

The security forces have yet to bear out the allegation of IRA involvement. Unionist politicians have often made similar claims in the wake of other bombings which have turned out to be the work of the Continuity Army Council, who are renegade break-away republicans opposed to the IRA.

This was the case following last Friday's car-bomb in the town of Moira, Co Down, which security sources now attribute to the CAC rather than the IRA. But the frequent Unionist claims that CAC equals IRA mean that many members of the public, especially on the Unionist side, find it difficult to differentiate.

The confusion is of some political use to Unionists who are campaigning to have Sinn Féin excluded from the multi-party talks not just for two weeks but for good.

The UVF, meanwhile, was also active yesterday, leaving an explosive device outside a border police station in the Irish Republic. The device, which was dealt with by army explosives experts, contained two five-gallon drums of petrol, a biscuit tin of 2.5 kilograms of commercial explosive, a home-made timing unit and detonators, as well as 40 rounds of pistol ammunition.

This week, the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, is to meet both Tony Blair and Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams for talks. Mr Blair has not yet said whether he will react to Sinn Féin's request for a meeting with him.



Richard Marlin, 5, yesterday received solo lessons at the village school in Potter Heigham, Norfolk. All pupils were removed from the 'failing' school over Christmas, but after Richard was bullied at his new school, his parents insisted he should be taught again at Potter Heigham. Story, page 2 Photograph: David Rose

Redecoration? It was not my idea, says Lord Irvine

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

THE Lord Chancellor yesterday insisted he had no responsibility for the £650,000 restoration of his grace and favour residence in the House of Lords.

In an attempt to restore some of the shine to his reputation as England's most senior law officer, and end the controversy, he issued a statement saying responsibility rested with three committees for the choice of wallpaper, furniture and fittings, which include a new lavatory. It made clear he had not been responsible for the decision to use wallpaper costing £59,211, beds at £8,000 each, or Pugin-style furniture to fill the apartment.

The move, which Downing Street had also hoped would stop the damage, did nothing to stop the flow of questions from Lord Irvine's Tory tormenters and the press in a campaign which the Government fears is verging on a vendetta. The Tories said the statement raised more questions than it answered.

The statement said the decision to refurbish his apartment had been taken by the Lords committees for works and finance chaired by Lord Boston of Faversham, 67, a Labour peer and former minister, and approved by the House of Lords Offices Committee and the whole House of Lords.

"The decision to refurbish the Residence was made by the relevant House authorities and not by the Lord Chancellor," said Lord Irvine, who also denied earlier suggestions that the restoration had been inherited from the previous Tory government.

An aide said: "Once the decision was made to refurbish the Residence, it had to be done to House of Lords standards. That is Pugin. It has to be done to that quality." However, one Whitehall source said Lady Irvine may well have been consulted by her husband on which wallpaper to have.

Once again, it's peace in our time...for now

By Robert Fisk in Baghdad

IT WAS peace in our time yet again. There were UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and the Iraqi deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, trading compliments in the aftermath of their latest exercise in crisis-resolution: an agreement that purportedly gives UN weapons inspectors full access to all military sites in Iraq in return for the foreseeable end of economic sanctions.

An old monochrome photograph of Saddam Hussein glowered down on the pair at their Baghdad press conference and within hours the Iraqi

President was chairing a meeting of his ruling command council and declaring "a day of victory for the Iraqi people."

"Constructive and successful," Mr Annan called his discussions. "Constructive, objective and intensive" was how a beaming Mr Aziz described them. One could not but be reminded of a beaming British prime minister at Heston aerodrome six decades ago. But who was playing Mr Chamberlain? Mr Annan or Mr Aziz?

There was talk about "balance" in the terms of the settlement that has supposedly reined in the dogs of war, although Mr Annan refused to give us any details. So did Mr

Aziz, who cut a sharp figure in his dark green military fatigues beside the grey-suited and white-headed Mr Annan. The latter hoped that sanctions would be lifted soon - something that is clearly not in the diary of Madeleine Albright - and Mr Aziz beamed approvingly.

Indeed the US Secretary of State was back on CNN yesterday, repeating her assertion that if the UN settlement was unsatisfactory to the United States, her country would feel free to "pursue its national interests" in the conflict. On the same basis, of course, Iraq might re-pursue its "national interests" in Kuwait, although this was not a name that crossed



Annan: Was he playing Mr Chamberlain?

any lips at the smoke-filled press conference in Baghdad yesterday. "I did not seek encouragement or otherwise

[from Mrs Albright]," Mr Annan informed us. "We did talk about the status of the discussion and where we are to end up. She did have some questions which I addressed and I will be talking further when I return to New York."

Asked if he had given the Iraqis any deadlines, Mr Annan put on a look of pained dignity. "I did not come here with ultimatums (sic) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations doesn't speak in these words." More modestly, he said that "a lot will depend on what happens when I get to New York - after the Security Council discusses my report, I would hope this would resolve the

issue... I can say that there are no time limits or deadlines in the agreement."

The UN, he added, should "be sensitive to the concerns of the dignity, security and sovereignty of Iraq."

Indeed it will, if Mr Annan has anything to do with it. Iraq crisis, pages 10, 11 Letters, page 16 Patrick Cockburn, page 17



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Bullies, 13, jailed for protection racket

By Andrew Buncombe

TWO playground bullies who ran a protection racket which terrorised pupils were yesterday locked up.

Sheffield Crown Court heard that the two teenagers, both aged 13, led a "gang of young thugs" who intimidated, abused and bullied other more vulnerable pupils into handing over lunch money and bus fares. The self-styled Gang on the Wall was broken up when they were arrested.

Yesterday Judge David Bentley, who ordered the boys to be detained, told them: "Bullying is always unpleasant for the young victims and I am quite satisfied that there was dreadful bullying going on. There was a protection racket being run by a gang of young thugs."

The court heard that the boys, who cannot be named for legal reasons, ran the protection racket at a comprehensive school in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. The school also cannot be identified.

Philip Bingham, for the prosecution, said police began their investigation after a complaint by a boy whose asthma had been made worse by persistent bullying.

"As it progressed it became clear that the bullying of that particular young man was far from being isolated," he said.

"As pupils were arriving at or leaving school they would be approached often by only one member of this gang, sometimes more than one. They would then be frightened into handing over their pocket

money, bus fares or dinner money.

"People realised they really had no choice but to hand over their money when approached. There was clearly an atmosphere of fear created in the school."

Another victim was threatened with a knife by one gang member and forced to hand over cash.

Mr Bingham said parents had tried to tell the school authorities but it appeared no action had been taken to stop the gang. One of the boys, now 14, was "uncon-

cerned" when he was interviewed by police, he added. The boy's barrister, Tony Cranfield, said the teenager was excluded from school in November 1996 and had only been involved for between six to eight weeks. He had since changed his attitude towards bullying.

Roger Thomas, representing the other boy, who is now aged 15, said the boys were not gang leaders but were rather younger members of a bigger group.

The 15-year-old, who had earlier ad-

mitted two counts of demanding money with menaces and five of robbery, was ordered to be detained for one year. The other boy, who admitted four robberies, and was detained for nine months.

The gang was charged with 39 offences, including robbery, blackmail, assault and theft. Other members had been dealt with at another court and some had received custodial sentences.

The acting head teacher at the school was at court but declined to comment.

Hague dodges stock response

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

William Hague, one of the few men to shock the Federation of Conservative Students by being more right-wing on crime than they were, was facing ignominious exposure last night as the husband of a tax-disc dodger.

The leader of the law-and-order party, who told the student group in 1986 that criminals should be put in the stocks, was forced to put his hands up to the inadvertent offence.

While it was Ffion who accidentally let the road tax on her Range Rover get two weeks out of date, it was her husband who put her on the wrong side of the law by leaving it in a public car park.

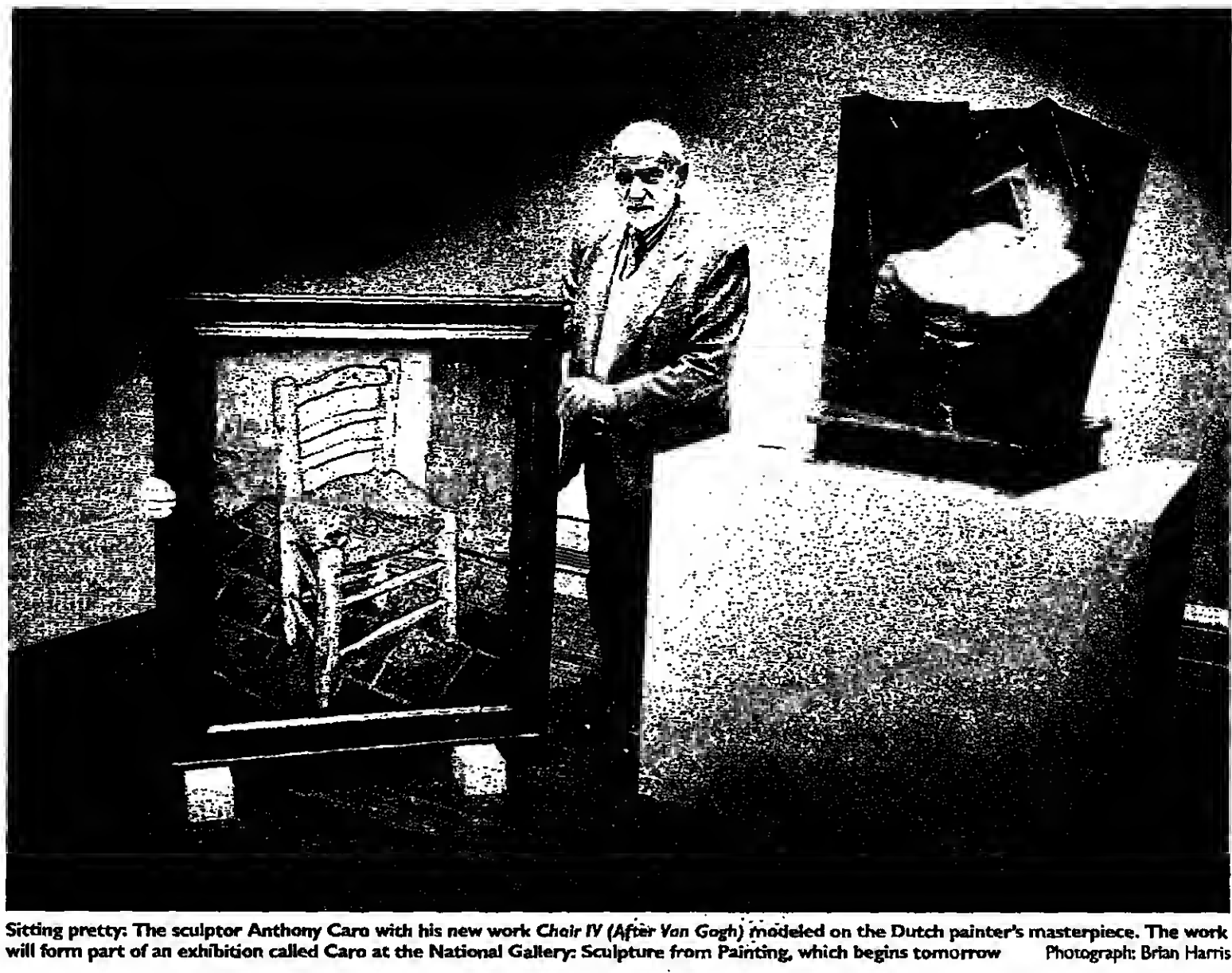
The oversight might not have been discovered had it not been compounded by a further crime - the theft of the vehicle from Teesside Airport, where Mr Hague had left it on February 15.

The incident ended when the blue Range Rover, bought by Ms Jenkins last August, was discovered by police two days later, abandoned 30 miles away in Redcar, Cleveland.

They were unable to trace ownership of the vehicle to Ms Jenkins though, and Mr Hague did not discover the theft until February 21, when he returned to pick it up.

A statement from Conservative Central Office on the issue last night was terse: "The tax-disc lapse was an oversight which has been rectified today," it said.

Mr Hague has been reported to be in favour of bringing back the birch for more serious offenders as well as the stocks for minor miscreants, presumably such as himself. He also believes in capital punishment, though it is presumed that, despite his embarrassment, he still does not rank Range Rover thieves in this category.



Sitting pretty: The sculptor Anthony Caro with his new work *Chair IV (After Van Gogh)* modelled on the Dutch painter's masterpiece. The work will form part of an exhibition called *Caro at the National Gallery: Sculpture from Painting*, which begins tomorrow. Photograph: Brian Harris

School reopens for its one and only pupil

By Matt Rodda

A PRIMARY school in Norfolk may have to stay open to teach just one child at a cost of £3,200 a month, it was revealed yesterday.

Richard Marlin's parents insist that the five-year-old he taught at the school which was left empty when parents removed all their children after inspectors said it was "failing".

The boy's parents were among those who removed children from the village school in Potter Heigham, in the Norfolk Broads, over Christmas. But they said Richard was bullied when he transferred to another school in the neigh-

bouring village of Catfield. The local education authority is legally obliged to teach Richard in the school if his parents want him to go and there is a place - which there is as the school was never formally closed.

The school reopened yesterday after the half-term holiday and a supply teacher taught Richard, under the supervision of a head teacher.

The Marlins now plan to keep their son at the school for as long as possible.

Norfolk County Council believes it is bad for Richard's development for him to be taught on his own. It is also concerned that keeping the school

open will cost £39,000 a year.

Richard spent his first day having an hour's English and an hour of maths. He practised painting in the afternoon and played football with the head teacher at break.

"We will keep Richard at Potter Heigham for as long as possible. For a five-year-old, bullying is not on," said Mrs Marlin. "He was getting pushed around and was not sleeping when he went to Catfield. He had become very quiet even though he is normally a chatty little boy."

Mrs Marlin said her son was bullied again - even though the school punished three boys who were picking on him.

"Richard is the sort of boy who thinks everybody is going to be friendly. He was getting scared to talk about what was happening and being bullied could have put him off school."

It was better for him to be on his own than to be picked on, she added.

She said she blamed the council for the situation as it had failed to sort out problems at Potter Heigham and this had caused parents to remove their children.

Tony Jackson, deputy director of Norfolk's education department, said: "It is a very curious situation."

"But our one concern must be about a five-year-old child bu-

ling in a school on his own."

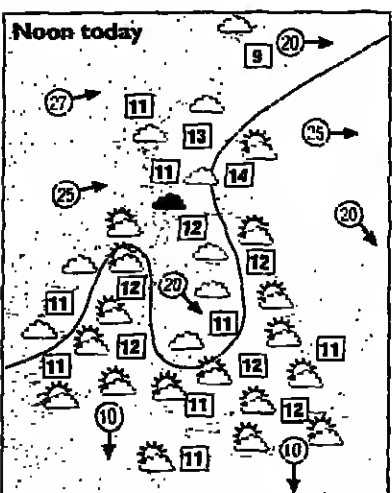
He said the council had already set aside a budget to run Potter Heigham although it would save the money if the school closed.

Councillors would discuss closing the school next month, he said, but it would take at least until September to complete the process.

Maureen Voissiere, head teacher of Catfield School, said there had only been one incident of bullying, something that was not normally a problem at the school.

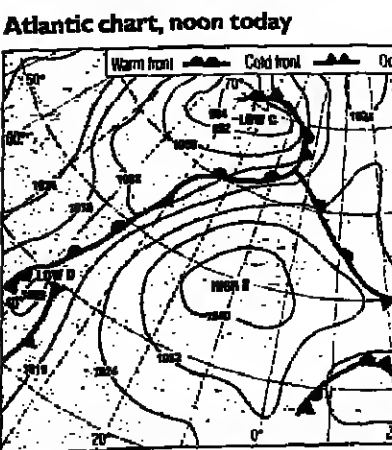
"The boys involved had been kept in during play times and made to write to Richard to apologise."

FORECAST



Today's forecast
England and Wales will be mainly dry and mild, and although there will be some large areas of cloud it will brighten up with sunny spells developing in most places. However, north-west England and north Wales will stay mostly cloudy and damp. Scotland and Northern Ireland will be rather cloudy and breezy, with drizzly rain affecting north-western coasts and hills, but sheltered eastern regions will see some sun and the highest temperatures.

Outlook for the next few days
Tomorrow will bring further rain and mist to the north and west of Scotland, but most other parts of the UK will be dry with clouds and sunshine. The best of the sunshine in southern England, and it will be a very mild day. On Thursday a marked cold front will cross the UK from the north-west bringing a short spell of rain followed by a drop in temperature, and Friday will be colder everywhere with snow showers in Scotland.



Air quality
Yesterday's readings: London Good, S. England Good, Wales Good, C. England Good, Scotland Good, N. Ireland Good.
Outlook for today: London Mod, S. England Good, Wales Good, C. England Good, Scotland Good, N. Ireland Good.

British Isles weather: most recent available figures at noon local time.

Area	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Pressure
London	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
South East	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
South West	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
West Midlands	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
East Midlands	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
North East	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
North West	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Yorkshire	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Humberside	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Derbyshire	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Nottingham	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Leicestershire	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Lincolnshire	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Northants	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Bedfordshire	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Herts	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Gloucestershire	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Wiltshire	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Dorset	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Devon	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015
Cornwall	C 14-17	14	W 10-15	1015

High tides

Location	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	11:54	6.3	21:44	8.7
Liverpool	09:15	6.5	19:30	8.2
Aberdeen	05:00	11.9	17:30	12.2
Hull (Humber Dock)	04:20	7.7	16:38	8.0
Greenock	10:51	3.1	23:03	3.0
Dun Laoghaire	09:37	3.6	22:10	3.8

Lighting-up times

Location	Lighting-up	Darkening
Belfast	17:49	to 07:22
Birmingham	17:37	to 07:03
Bristol	17:41	to 07:04
Cardiff	17:40	to 07:19
London	17:32	to 06:55
Manchester	17:31	to 07:07
Newcastle	17:31	to 07:06

Sun & moon

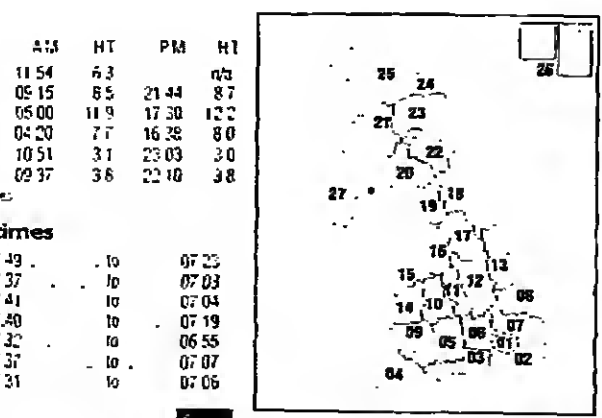
Sun rises	06:57	Sun sets	17:32
Moon rises	05:15	Moon sets	14:54

Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 481777 for the latest road news and traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 14p per min at all times (inc VAT).

World weather

Location	Temp	Wind	Pressure
London	14	W 10-15	1015
Paris	12	W 10-15	1015
Madrid	10	W 10-15	1015
Rome	12	W 10-15	1015
Athens	14	W 10-15	1015
Beijing	8	W 10-15	1015
Tokyo	10	W 10-15	1015
Sydney	18	W 10-15	1015
Melbourne	16	W 10-15	1015
Perth	18	W 10-15	1015
Wellington	16	W 10-15	1015
Auckland	16	W 10-15	1015
Christchurch	16	W 10-15	1015
Dunedin	16	W 10-15	1015
Wellington	16	W 10-15	1015
Auckland	16	W 10-15	1015
Christchurch	16	W 10-15	1015
Dunedin	16	W 10-15	1015



INDEPENDENT Weatherline
For the latest forecast call 0891 5009. Informed by the two daily fax and radio bulletins by the 24-hour news. Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

WILLIAM HARTSTON WEATHER WISE

WHAT on earth is happening to our weather? January was some 30 per cent wetter and two degrees Celsius warmer than average; February has so far been one of the warmest since records began. In Bournemouth, people have been seen swimming in the sea, and there were traffic jams as people headed for the coast in unprecedented numbers over the St Valentine's weekend.

Now cast your mind back to last year. January 1997 was the driest for 200 years and the coldest for 10 years. February

was generally mild and windy, though north-west England and southern Scotland had three times as much rain as usual. With the irrationality of people who bet on lottery numbers that haven't been picked for a long time, we might have expected a particularly cold February - as though winter would gain revenge for its late arrival. But it hasn't happened.

There are three theories to explain what's been going on. The simplest is to shrug it off as all within the bounds of normal fluctuations of weather. With every new broken record, however, that becomes more difficult to sustain. In Paris, for example, a new record February temperature of 17.4C was set a couple of weeks ago, a full 2.4C above the previous record. Such a dramatic increase demands explanation.

The second theory is global warming. The Earth is getting warmer because of all the greenhouse gases; so England is getting warmer too. Simple. But it's not so simple. The most extravagant predictions of global warming envisage a rise by only a few degrees in a century, and while a few degrees over the entire Earth can make a huge difference in specific locations, no mechanism has yet been suggested that would account for our hazy February weather this year. Indeed, there is a good argument that global warming would actually make Britain a colder place because of the Arctic melting it would induce.

Finally, and most likely, there is good old, blame-it-for-everything, El Niño, which has been warming up the waters of the Pacific and might be expected to have a strong, but as yet not understood, influence on the south-westerly winds that have been fighting off the easterlies and northerlies that so often seize us in their icy grip in February. On the other hand, global warming itself may be responsible for the ferocity of this year's El Niño; or it could be that the current El Niño is no more than a random fluctuation worse than any other El Niño.

The extremes of 1998 will surely lead to an improvement in our understanding of global weather patterns. The question at the beginning of this piece ought not to have been "What on earth..." but "What in the ocean" is happening to our weather.

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RECYCLED PAPER

Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

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Favourite gangster could make his greatest getaway

By Tim Hulse

IT was revealed yesterday that according to a confidential parole board report, the release from prison of Reg Kray now constitutes a "minimal risk" in the opinion of psychiatrists who have interviewed him.

Kray, 64, was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum of 30 years in 1969 for the murder of Jack "The Hat" McVitie and taking into account time served before sentence, the 30 years are due to elapse in May. Disclosure of the report will provide further ammunition for those who have lobbied for some years for his early release.

In recent years Kray has shown himself to be far from shy of publicity and some believe that it is only his continued fondness for the limelight that has kept him in prison for so long. Only last June, he was given seven days' solitary confinement after calling Talk Radio to complain about the 12-year sentence received by his brother Charlie for involvement in a £39m drug deal.

In the words of his lawyer, Trevor Linn, Kray "regrets the taking of life *per se*, he regrets the effect on those persons close to the victim, but he has less feeling for the victim himself - a gangster whom he believed was out to kill him. Allied to a disavowal of his former way of life... this is an honest and, above all, genuine expression of remorse."

"I have got no regrets," Kray told *The Independent* in March 1995. "The violence we used was against people from our own criminal culture." This is the argument which is frequently used by his apologists, but the truth is that the Krays' intimidatory techniques had almost succeeded in putting them beyond the reach of the law.

And whether McVitie was a villain or not, his murder was a particularly horrific affair. The victim was held from behind by Ron Kray,

who urged his twin brother, "Kill him. Reg. Do him". Reg plunged a carving knife into McVitie's face below the eye. After further butchering he was left impaled to the floor through the throat.

In August last year, Kray was moved from Maidstone Prison to Wayland, a category C jail in Norfolk, which would seem to suggest that parole could follow in a couple of years. According to the leaked report, Kray plans to live with his new wife and his friends in a country house in Norfolk, where he intends to run a recording studio.

Trevor Turner, a consultant psychiatrist at Homerton hospital in east London, is quoted as saying that: "His future plans with regard to writing and the music industry may have a somewhat unrealistic quality, reflecting more his role as an icon than particular abilities, but he did not hold them with any specific conviction, accepting without rancour that he might have to rely on other forms of financial support, for example social security."

Whether Kray is really in need of social security funds is open to some conjecture considering the substantial sums of money he has made during his prison career, beginning in 1988 with the publication of *Our Story*, the twins' autobiography, for which they were said to have received a £100,000 advance. Since then the royalties have also rolled in from Reg's subsequent solo works, which include *Reg Kray's Book of Slang* (a rumoured £75,000 advance) and his own autobiography, *Born Fighter*.

Then there was the film, *The Krays*, for which the twins' proceeds have been estimated at anything up to £1m. Other sources of income have been limited edition paintings and T-shirts. When Kray finally does get out, that old iconic status is unlikely to have lost its money-making appeal. Expect REG IS OUT T-shirts to be coming your way soon.

IN THE NEWS REGGIE KRAY

Reg's Mr Bountiful
Last February Karl Crompton, who had won the lottery, gave Kray a gift of £100,000 from the £11m jackpot he had won the previous summer. Kray was reported to have spent £72,000 of the money on charity events such as parties for pensioners and days out for sick children.



Kray in his prime: He was sentenced to a minimum of 30 years in 1969

Photograph: Hulton Getty

A poem by Reg called 'Free'

I am the freest of the free
I do not recognise the clock
The day or the years
My life is without cares
Because I refuse
To count the days or years
So, I am free
There's no boundaries for me
I am the freest of the free
This is my philosophy.

Friends of Reg

For some years campaigners have sought to secure an early release for Reg Kray. In October 1993 a petition with over 18,000 signatures was handed in at 10 Downing Street demanding parole for both Reg and Ron. Celebrity supporters included Roger Daltrey, Patsy Kensit and Barbara Windsor (pictured). Mike Reid, now Windsor's colleague in *EastEnders*, suggested at the



time that, "Had they remained free, the London of today would be a safer place. During their reign there was no mugging."

Two years later the Sun columnist Gary Bushell berated the then Home Secretary Michael Howard for saying that parole for Kray was out of the question. Bushell was of the opinion that Kray should have been hanged in 1969, but he now considered that keeping him behind bars proved nothing. "He did not kill a kid or a law-abiding citizen. He topped another villain," concluded Bushell. "By our sick liberal standards he has paid for his crime."

Reg's wedding

Kray's first wife, Frances, committed suicide in 1967, two years after their marriage. He met his current wife, Roberta, in Maidstone prison in 1995. An English graduate 25 years his junior, she was working as a freelance media consultant and had been asked to help organise publicity for a video Reg had contributed to about his brother Ron. Their wedding took place in the prison's Church of the Good Shepherd last July and Kray's best man was his fellow inmate, Bradley "Goomball" Allardice, who is serving twelve years for armed robbery. Kray has said that if he is released he would like to become a father. "I know by studying my body that I am as virile now as I ever was," he commented. "Perhaps it's partly to do with the cold shower I have every morning after I phone Roberta." "Regarding our love life, I have just switched myself off," said Roberta.

Reg's chosen epitaph
"Don't weep by my graveside."

You must love my Dome, orders Mandelson

By Anthony Bevins
Political Correspondent

THE Millennium Dome was being launched on a wave of superlatives last night as Peter Mandelson vied with the Prime Minister to promote interest in today's first instalment announcement of contents.

"The Millennium is a meeting point in history," the Minister without Portfolio said in a press release, "a unifying opportunity for people to come together from all backgrounds and all parts of the United Kingdom. The point at which Britain, with its proud past, meets Britain, with new confidence in

the future. The Dome will be a Dome of the Future - a Dome of exploration, discovery and revelation. It will be our Dome - a shared experience, with people setting aside differences and divisions to unite in Britain's celebration, unique in the world, of the new Millennium.

"The Dome will be like a giant mirror for the nation. The reflection I want to see is of a nation intensely proud of its past and its achievements, its ingenuity and creativity, its bravery and its sense of justice and fair play. But more than that, I want the Dome to capture the spirit of modern Britain - a nation that is confident, excited, impatient for the future. A na-

tion that wants to move forward together, gathering up our past to address our future, in common purpose."

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said that Mr Blair would be saying this morning - when he unveils the contents list for the first seven "modules" of the Dome, that once people saw what it would contain, there would be a "huge bandwagon" of support for it.

Mr Blair was planning to say that Britain was a place of daring and striving for excellence, leading the world in its creativity, and it should, therefore, "shout about it".

The Dome would be a celebration of the "best of British",

good for business and good for tourism and Britain's standing in the world, with people from around the world visiting the Dome and having "the time of their lives".

The Prime Minister and Mr Mandelson were also at pains to dispel three "myths" at present surrounding the Dome Project. "First, the Millennium Experience is not using £750 million of taxpayers' money," Mr Mandelson's press release said. "It is a public-private partnership. £399m of lottery money invested by the Millennium Commission will be balanced by well over £300m in private sector sponsorship and commercial income."

Test cricketer killed by ball

THE FORMER Indian Test cricketer Raman Lamba was declared dead yesterday three days after being hit on the head by a ball.

Lamba, 38, an opener who played four Test matches and 29 one-day international matches for India, suffered severe brain injuries after being hit while fielding in the short-leg position during a match on Friday in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka. He was playing for local side Abahani Krira Chakra in premier division match against Mohammadan Sporting Club, and was believed not to have been wearing a helmet.

The blow knocked him unconscious and he was taken to the intensive care unit of the Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Research in Dhaka, where he spent three days in a coma before doctors declared him dead yesterday morning.

Former England and Yorkshire batsman Geoff Boycott, speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live, said the accident underlined the importance of close fielders wearing a helmet.

"The sad thing for me is it appears, from newspaper reports, if accurate, that he [Lamba] was fielding close in without a helmet. A bang on the helmet may give you a bit of a shock but you should be fine after that."

Over and out

1751 The Prince of Wales (son of George II) was hit in the side while playing cricket at his Buckinghamshire home, Cliveden House. The blow caused an internal abscess, which burst fatally a few months later. One theory says he was hit by a cricket ball, another claims it was a tennis ball.

1870 George Summers died from a blow on the head while batting for Nottinghamshire against the MCC at Lords. He was 25. The bowler, named Platts, was so distraught he changed from fast bowling to slow.

1942 The former Test cricketer Andy Ducat died of a heart attack while batting in a match between Home Guard units at Lords. He was given not out 29 on the scorecard. He was 56.

1959 Abdul Aziz was hit in the chest while batting in Karachi. He had a weak heart, and died from the blow. For his team's second innings, the scorecard pronounced Aziz 'absent dead'.

Leading Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar, who played alongside Lamba on his international debut in Pakistan in 1989, said: "It's difficult to put my grief in words. I can't imagine a player died after being hit by the ball. It is truly tragic."

Lamba played club cricket in Bangladesh as a part-time professional. During his international career, he scored 782 runs in 32 one-day internationals, including a century on his debut against Australia.

RNLI targets 'Titanic' viewers

By Rosa Prince

Film-goers traumatised by watching Kate Winslet battle against a watery grave in the blockbuster movie *Titanic* are donating hundreds of pounds to a lifeboat charity on their way out of the cinema.

Volunteers from some branches of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) have been fund-raising outside cinemas screening the film. Other branches have placed collection boxes in cinema lobbies.

Mary Jenner, area organiser for the Devon region of the RNLI, said watching the film about the 1912 *Titanic* disaster, in which hundreds of passengers died, made viewers aware of the horror of death by drowning.

She said: "I think that people have a real fear of drowning. Perhaps it's something to do with being an island race. *Titanic* makes them confront the reality of drowning. When they see the film they start thinking about it."

Cinemas in Devon, the north east, Wales, Oban and Belfast have been taking part in the project and organisers hope to collect several thousand pounds by the end of the film's run.

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Prescott says recycle land for most homes

By Colin Brown and Nicholas Schoon

FORMER ministers last night claimed that the floodgates had been opened to legal challenges against housing development in beauty spots across Britain after the announcement of new planning guidelines requiring councils to ensure that most new housing goes on "recycled" land.

"Appeals will be made by every single council whose county or district plan has already been confirmed," said John Gummer, the former Tory environment secretary.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Environment, Regions and Transport, immediately faced pleas from MPs on all sides of the Commons yesterday to look again at controversial housing schemes in their areas after announcing new guidelines requiring 60 per cent of housing to be built on recycled land.

He was asked to intervene in the development of 1,500 houses in the Aire Valley, Yorkshire, by Labour MP Ann Cryer and appeals could be made elsewhere such as Stevenage, where he has agreed to 10,000 houses in the green belt. It could strengthen the legal challenge by West Sussex, which is appealing to the courts against his order rejecting a cut in the county's housing allocation.

Mr Prescott said last night that the previous target of 4.4 million new homes by 2016 could be exceeded and that he was considering a "greenfield" tax. But *The Independent* has learnt that it will not be included in the Chancellor's Budget on 17 March. Mr Prescott is facing resistance from Gordon Brown over demands that the money raised from housing in greenfield sites should be kept by his department for a major redevelopment of recycled land.

Mr Prescott's long-awaited statement outlined measures that should make de-

velopers search harder for opportunities to build homes on derelict or under-used land within the cities. But tackling crime, poor school standards and pollution in the cities are all seen as key ingredients.

Tony Burton, of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, which has led the fight to slow urban sprawl, said: "This could be a watershed. But it will take years of effort from the Government and local councils to turn the ideas in this document into action on the ground."

The Government's new national target is for 60 per cent of new homes to be built on previously developed land. The most recent figures show 52 per cent had been achieved in the Nineties. This target will not be uniform throughout England. In each region, groups of local councils will be expected to come up with their own target.

The Government stands by its estimate that 4.4 million new households will be formed between 1991 and 2016 in England. But ministers want to devolve more power to the regions over levels of house-building. If too few homes are provided, and this leads to emigration, overcrowding and rising property prices, they want monitoring to pick this up and allow more housing land to be allocated.

From now on, housebuilders seeking planning permission for greenfield sites will have to demonstrate that there is no suitable derelict, urban land nearby. Vacant sites near to bus routes, railway stations, workplaces, shopping centres and other facilities will be favoured above more remote ones.

The Department of the Environment will also set up a database on how land is used in England. Until now, the debate has been bedevilled by a dearth of data on how much vacant and contaminated land there is. There were no details in yesterday's statement about how the new survey would be financed.



On location: Lord Rogers standing beneath the grim Hammersmith flyover in west London yesterday for the launch of the Architecture Foundation Roadshow. Photograph: John Voos

Architects choose London eyesores for beauty therapy

LORD ROGERS of Riverside, new Labour's Mr Architecture, joined with ministers past and present yesterday to launch a scheme to transform some of the capital's worst eyesores.

The Architecture Foundation aims to landscape a series of London's most unpleasant locations, ranging from the Hammersmith flyover to areas around Wormwood Scrubs. Over the coming months, architects will consult residents from different areas of London on how they want to see the areas changed. In a trial project, people in nine areas of Hammersmith and Fulham are to be consulted within the next three months. The local council

has already agreed to put the resulting ideas into practice.

Lord Rogers, chairman of the trustees, was present yesterday as the Architecture Foundation Roadshow was launched. The roadshow will hold public meetings in four boroughs, with the aim of finding ideas and agreement for rescuing key, decrepit public places, including parks, playing fields, riverside walks and underpasses.

The Labour peer was also yesterday appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, to head a task force advising the Government on how brownfield sites could be turned back into thriving communities.

— Nicholas Schoon

Prison guards threaten strike over Government 'betrayal'

PRISON officers yesterday threatened a national dispute over the Government's refusal to reverse a ban on industrial action.

A conference in London of the Prison Officers' Association accused Labour of "betrayal" and agreed to use disruptive action to protect the health and safety of prison officers. Mark Healy, chairman of the POA, said confrontation was now "likely" within weeks.

The Prison Service has offered a new pay review body and independent arbitration for settling disputes to compensate for the Government's refusal to restore the right to take action.

— Jason Bennett

Homeless to be evicted

THE LAST homeless people living in one of Europe's oldest cardboard camps are to be evicted within a month.

The London borough of Lambeth yesterday won an eviction order against 18 people and others it was not able to identify who have been living in the Bullring and Undercroft below Waterloo Bridge.

Shaun Tomlinson, 30, a resident of the Bullring for 10 years, said it would be difficult for some people to move into homes of their own after up to 15 years sleeping rough, without huge amounts of support. For him, the decision means the loss of his job as well as his home, as he's the only registered seller of the *Big Issue* magazine for the homeless in that area.

A Lambeth Council spokeswoman said the council hoped that the homeless people would now realise that the borough was serious about regenerating the area. Part of it has already been cleared to make way for the British Film Institute £20m giant screen cinema and the council now hopes to press ahead with its rejuvenation of the area.

Fourteen rough sleepers have already been rehoused or are about to be rehoused, the council spokeswoman said, and the remainder would be given 28 days before the possession order was enforced.

— Louise Jury

New rules for Channel 4

CHANNEL 4 has had its broadcasting licence re-written so that it must produce more programmes with multicultural and disability themes. It also has to reduce the number of repeats and imported American programmes it uses.

The channel will now have to air at least three hours of television a week about, and for, audiences from Britain's ethnic minorities. It also has to broadcast some of those shows in its peak evening period. The new terms are a victory for comedians Lenny Henry and Michael Palin, and novelist Ben Okri, who campaigned for increased multicultural output.

As well as extra disability shows, the channel must now increase to 60 per cent the proportion of shows commissioned specially for it. This follows some concern among some critics about its dependence on imported programmes like *Friends*, *Frasier* and *Opah*.

The broadcaster's licence had to be re-written by the Independent Television Commission after the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, decided to end the controversial funding formula that meant Channel 4 paid a share of its advertising revenues to ITV. With the extra money it now has, it is expected to return to a more radical style of programming than in recent years.

— Paul McCann, Media Correspondent

Driver survives cliff crash

A MOTORIST was recovering in hospital last night after his car plunged 200ft over cliffs yesterday.

The driver, who is in his early 30s, was flung clear of the vehicle and left stranded on a grassy ledge about 70ft down. An RAF helicopter crew winched him to safety from the cliffs at Braich y Pwll near Aberdaron on the Llyn Peninsula in North Wales and airlifted him to Bangor Hospital. He is being treated for a broken arm and minor injuries.

An RAF spokesman said: "We were alerted shortly after 1pm by coastguards who had reports that a car had gone off the cliff top and into the sea."

"The driver was very cold but we had expected to find him much more severely injured."

Day of destiny for jealous British nurse who shot dead her husband in Florida

By Phil Davison
in Miami

FLORIDA police call it the Valentine's Day murder. And British nurse Helele Cummings, who confessed to shooting her husband to death in a jealous rage, could find out today if she will face the electric chair.

A Florida state attorney listened on Sunday to police evidence before deciding

whether the killing was premeditated, that is, first-degree murder, which could mean the death penalty; second-degree, which could mean life; or manslaughter, with a jail term of up to 25 years. Mrs Cummings, a white 32-year-old of Preston, Lancashire, who had lived in the United States for 10 years and worked at the Holy Cross Hospital in North Lauderdale outside Fort Lauderdale, had been married

to Tyler Cummings, 30, a black male nurse, for three years. They had a six-month-old son Tyler Jr, now in the custody of his paternal grandparents.

According to a confession cited by police, Mrs Cummings had filed for divorce last September after suspecting her husband of adultery. But she was living with him in an attempt at reconciliation.

On St Valentine's Day, she found pho-

tographs of another woman - "partially dressed or undressed", according to police - in his pick-up van. She stormed into their villa in North Lauderdale's sleepy Forest Glen district at 3pm. Finding him in bed after a nightshift, she emptied a .357 Ruger Magnum revolver, according to the confession.

Mrs Cummings then grabbed her child, dropped the gun and ran off. A block and a half way, she stopped someone in the street

who had a cellular phone, dialled 911 - the US equivalent of 999 - and shouted: "I've done something terrible. Got to 100 East Jasmine Lane." She then ran to a friend's house and waited for police to pick her up. It is not clear where she had obtained the gun.

Mrs Cummings is being held in Broward County jail, Fort Lauderdale, without bail. Florida state attorney Deborah Zimmit was expected to decide today whether

the killing was premeditated. If so, a grand jury will decide whether she should face the death penalty. If convicted and given the death penalty, it would be execution by "Old Sparky", an early 20th century electric chair.

A woman convicted of murder - known as "the Black Widow" - is next month due to become the first woman executed in Florida for 150 years.

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Students from new universities get worst jobs

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

STUDENTS who go to new universities are at a disadvantage in the job market, according to the results of a wide-ranging new study of graduate employment.

Many employers put them at the bottom of the heap when they are recruiting new graduates.

The study from the University of Cardiff of nearly 400 of the top graduate employers raises questions about the Government's policy of charging students the same tuition fee wherever they choose to study.

From September, all students will be charged £1,000 a year for tuition regardless of their subject or institution. Some of the best-known universities are already challenging the Government's determination to stop them charging more.

More than a quarter of the employers in the study target only a small number of "top" universities. Two-thirds of employers targeted universities they rated most highly. Overall, companies put universities with whom they had close ties at the top of the list for graduates who interested them most - and that included a few new universities.

They were more interested in whether universities required a high A-level point score than their age or prestige. So graduates from redbrick and 1960s universities, such as Warwick and Lancaster, are in as much demand as those from Oxbridge and ancient universities such as Durham and Edinburgh. New universities came last.

Dr Anthony Hesketh, who carried out the survey, said: "The implications for the debate about fees are pretty hot. It is going to be very difficult to avoid differential fees for different types of university."

Dr Geoffrey Copland, of the Coalition of Modern Universities and vice-chancellor of the University of Westminster, said: "There is a problem. Some companies recruit in the image of people they have always recruited. But our graduates are often employed in local firms where they have been on sandwich placements, or by smaller companies."

According to the survey funded by Hobsons, the publishers, employers are not disenchanted with the standard of graduates despite the high expansion in student numbers during the last decade.

Around three-quarters think standards have stayed the same or are improving. Most employers rated the performance of the graduates they employed highly.

Those from the redbrick universities had even higher ratings than those from Oxbridge.

Generally, graduates were better at learning new material quickly and having new ideas than they were at being efficient and reliable.

The research reveals a mismatch between the skills employers want and those that most graduates possess. Technical skills, numeracy and information technology skills are much less important to employers than the ability to communicate and to work in a team. Even in science and engineering jobs, the latter are highly rated.

Dr Hesketh suggests that the emphasis on the need for information technology in last year's Dearing review of higher education may be misplaced.

The salaries new graduates can command vary hugely from just £7,500 in a small business to £28,000 in a merchant bank. The average salary is £15,100. Just 5 per cent of jobs for new graduates pay more than £20,000.

There is no sign that the market for graduates is declining, despite universities' increased output. Only 2 per cent of employers expected the number of graduates they took on to decrease and a fifth were expecting to increase recruitment.

Dr Hesketh believes that the rising expansion of the graduate labour force is sustainable. "Those students who are wondering whether it is worth paying fees at university should go ahead and do it," he said.

MCC's historic wait for maidens may soon be over

By David Llewellyn

ONE of the oldest and most elitist bodies in world sport will decide today whether to allow women to join its membership. Those familiar with the machinations and outlook of the Marylebone Cricket Club are not optimistic that it will overturn more than two centuries of discrimination.

A meeting tonight at the indoor cricket school at Lord's will hear the result of a ballot on the issue. The MCC committee has recommended that a rule dating back to 1787 be overturned. But with the proposal requiring a two-thirds majority of the club's 18,000 members the feeling is that it will fail, as a similar motion did in 1991 when 2,371 voted for women and 4,727 against.

Roger Knight, the MCC secretary, said: "I'm sure there will be a much larger percentage of the club in favour than there was last time, when only 33 per cent supported a change to the rules."

The exclusion of women was one of the reasons that MCC's application for a £4.5m



Into bat: Sophie Lamb, 14, with her father Tim Lamb, chief executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board, who will vote for women members of MCC Photograph: Richard Watt

lottery funding was refused. The money would have helped rebuild the Grandstand at Lord's, which is owned by MCC and is regarded as the game's spiritual home. And a "No" vote would not be welcomed by the game's rulers in Britain, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). Their chief executive Tim Lamb said yesterday: "I don't think we would be pleased. We would

regard it as unfortunate." The problem is that although MCC ceded control of the game to the then Test and County Cricket Board 30 years ago, the world at large still views the organisation as being in charge, a perception not helped by the fact that the august body is the guardian of the laws of the game.

Mr Lamb added: "I don't think too much should be

set by a No decision, because although the MCC has a great history and plays a major contribution to the game, it is the ECB which is promoting a modern forward-thinking view of the game and how it should be taken up at all levels."

This poll, like the one in 1991, was sparked by an application from the former England women's captain Rachael Heyhoe-Flint, whose husband

Derrik is a member.

Yesterday Mrs Heyhoe-Flint, 58, said: "I'm not very optimistic... I think we might get a majority, but I don't think it will be the requisite two-thirds. Having waited seven years since the last time I was naughty enough to apply to become a member I'm not holding out too much hope."

Several high-profile members, such as Tim Rice and

Dennis Amis, have backed the move, but a more traditional view came from Bill Edwards, press officer for Saracens Rugby Club and an MCC member for 23 years. "I'm too old for change and I don't want the upheaval," said Edwards, who at 54 is three years younger than the average MCC member. "Whatever spoon you feed in the sugar with there will always be problems. Look at

the House of Lords - there are over 100 women there now and they are putting a bust of Emily Pankhurst in the corner and even setting up crèches.

"We don't want any of that. I love the comfort and the escapism, when you can just sit around and chat with the lads. It's purely chauvinist. I know 300 or so members and they all say they are not having bloody women in. Why don't they

make their own club? Why invade someone else's territory?"

The popularity of the MCC is such that there is an 18-year waiting list of men wishing to enter this elite male preserve. Anything that could extend that waiting time - and there is little doubt that a vote admitting women would have that very effect - would be as welcome as a flat tonic in their gin.

10 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

1. Pull down their genes and examine their chromosomes: men have a Y-chromosome, which is a sort of stunted version of the female X-chromosome.
2. Get them to take their sweaters off: men tug from behind the neck; women execute an elegant crossed-arms manoeuvre.
3. Measure their corpus callosum, joining the two halves of the brain. Women's are 23 per cent thicker.
4. Men are better at rotating three-dimensional objects in their heads. This may account for the fact that most good spin bowlers are male.
5. Kneel down; place one elbow at your knees, and extend the arm and hand, marking the furthest point the middle-finger can reach with an upright matchbox. Now clasp hands behind your back and try to pick up the matchbox in your mouth. If you can do so without overbalancing, you are a woman.
6. Women are better than men at remembering where things are.
7. Women examine their fingernails with fingers stretched away from them; men curve their fingers towards them.
8. Women hang toilet paper to curl over at the top of the roll; men have it peeping out from underneath.
9. An average woman is 25 per cent fat; a man is only 15 per cent fat.
10. When women walk, they lead with their hips; men lead with their shoulders.

Kew centre to detect fake herbs

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

A CENTRE for detecting fake Chinese herbs which have caused serious injury to patients who have taken them as alternative medicines is to be set up at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. Kew is appealing for £700,000 to establish the centre, which will keep records of the 400-500 Chinese species commonly used in herbal remedies and provide expert help to identify them and check their quality.

There has been a series of cases in which traditional Chinese remedies available from Oriental pharmacies have been found to contain herbs that have been wrongly identified, adulterated or deliberately faked. The high demand has endangered some rare plants in the wild and substitutes disguised as the real thing have been offered with nasty results. Some have been found to be contaminated with heavy metals such as arsenic and lead.

More than 100 cases of poisoning or serious side-effects have been linked to the use of Chinese and other traditional remedies. Dr Virginia Murray, deputy director of the National Poisons Information Service at Guy's hospital, London, which is supporting the centre, said: "It is terribly important we get this centre off the ground. Some of these herbs are known to be highly toxic."

A 1995 study conducted by a Chinese pharmacologist suggested 10-25 per cent of all Chinese herbs on sale in Britain were wrongly identified. Christine Leon, botanist in traditional medicine at Kew, said: "That is a staggering figure. I found it quite frightening. If I was seeking treatment I would want an assurance that the herbs being prescribed were what they claimed to be."

Monty Python team set for one last laugh

By Tim Cornwell
in Los Angeles

THE FIVE surviving members of the Monty Python team are to take to the stage in Aspen, Colorado, next month for the first time in 10 years. While the event is not billed as a Monty Python show, the mere fact they are appearing together is generating huge excitement among comedy fans.

John Cleese, Michael Palin, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam will meet for a retrospective and tribute to their work at the US Comedy Arts Festival, surrounded by contemporary American comics who regard Python's anarchic style as an inspiration.

The 90-minute appearance is being taped for the American cable channel Home Box Office. They will take questions as clips of their work are played, an HBO spokesman said, with a US comedian, Robert Klein, presiding. But Michael Palin, fuelling speculation, told the Hollywood trade magazine *Variety* that they will probably perform a sketch or two.

The last time the five performed together was for a more sombre occasion - the memorial service for fellow Python Graham Chapman, who died of cancer in 1989. "We've considered getting together before, but there's been this feeling that we aren't quite complete without Graham and it would always be so," Palin said. It is 30 years since Python first aired in 1969.

A five-year television run led



to spin-off films like 1975's *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. But the team have long since forged separate and creative careers, and sometimes tire of being asked about a show that is now enshrined in modern comic and cultural history.

Palin's star is riding high as the host of a series of phenomenally successful travel shows, the latest

a jaunt around the Pacific titled *Palin's Rim*.

He declined an invitation to a 25th anniversary dinner in the US, which had also fuelled speculation of a reunion. But he told *Variety* in January that "when we meet up together face-to-face, there's always the chance that something may come of it... if we have a good time in Aspen, that

may just mean that we'd consider a future project - most likely a movie, I would think."

John Cleese's latest film was *Fierce Creatures*, the less than stellar follow-up to *A Fish Called Wanda*. More recently he was the voice of an erudite talking gorilla in the recent Disney film *George of the Jungle*. Terry Gilliam has won accolades as a director of

such films as *Brazil* and *The Fisher King*. Terry Jones is a successful film-maker and children's book writer, while Eric Idle became a Hollywood writer.

The four-day Aspen festival draws many top contemporary comic acts in America, running from the television skit *Politically Incorrect* to the scatological cartoon *South Park*.

The full Monty: the original line-up. The five survivors are to inflict their brand of humour on the fashionable Colorado resort of Aspen at the US Comedy Arts Festival next month

Parliament to get more airtime

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

THE BBC has reacted to concern from MPs about its planned coverage of Parliament by increasing the amount of airtime given to Westminster while at the same time making it harder to find.

Yesterday *In Parliament*, Radio 4's morning Westminster round-up, is to be reduced to broadcasting just on Long Wave. But as a sop to MPs who signed an Early Day Motion when it was rumoured to be ending altogether, the programme will be extended from 14 minutes a day to 23 minutes a day. Listeners who wish to tune in to politics will be warned about the frequencies splitting, while Radio 4 FM continues with the *Today* programme until 9am.

The evening Westminster round-up, *Today in Parliament*, survives but *In Committee* is to be replaced by a new general politics show, *The Westminster Hour*. The *Week in Westminster*, the weekly round-up of politics hosted by guest newspaper journalists, is losing its prime Radio 4 Saturday morning slot, but will move to 8.30pm on Thursday and stay at the same length.

On television the discussion show *The Midnight Hour* and round-up show *On The Record* are to be scrapped. They will be replaced by a nightly programme which will combine discussion and a review of daily Westminster events. This will air at midnight on BBC 2 from Monday to Thursday.

In all the BBC is claiming an extra 79 hours of coverage of Parliament a year on radio and TV combined. The changes have come about because of a desire by Radio 4's controller, James Boyle, to stop millions of listeners switching from his network the second *Yesterday in Parliament* starts.

'MI6 knew firm was selling arms to Saddam'

By Kim Sengupta

THE High Court in London will today hear allegations that the British security services encouraged a defence company to secretly channel arms to Saddam Hussein.

As diplomacy continues to avert another war with Iraq, MI6 documents are due to be presented revealing for the

first time that businessman Stephan Adolphus Kock, who was on the board of Astra Holdings, had worked as a "support agent" for the security services for over 20 years.

Czech-born Mr Kock was also involved with defence contracts with Malaysia. Other documents due to be presented to the court include a letter from him about the matter to

the then defence secretary George Younger in April 1987.

The documents in question relate to a case in which the Department of Trade and Industry is seeking to disqualify the directors of Astra Holdings, which collapsed in 1992, for alleged malpractice and mismanagement of the company.

The directors, including the former chairman Gerald

James, are claiming that the security services planted a spy on the Astra board and turned a blind eye to the company and its subsidiaries supplying arms to Iraq including components for the supergun. This was because the Iraqi regime was the only one to buy against fundamentalist Iran.

Mr Kock supplied MI6 with information about Astra. He is

said to have voiced his suspicion to the intelligence agency that a Belgian company, PRB, acquired by Astra was involved in supplying rocket propellants to the Iraqis. Mr James in turn claims the Government encouraged Astra towards PRB.

Mr Kock also had a relationship with MI5, the documents are believed to show. During the 1980s he was a senior consultant with the international division of the Midland Bank, and wrote to Mr Younger in this capacity.

Mr Kock joined the board of Astra in 1986. He won a power struggle with other board members including Mr James, who was ousted as chairman in March 1990. The documents are said to show he reported his victory to the security services.

The DTI is not seeking the disqualification of Mr Kock as it considers him less responsible for any wrongdoing.

The documents are also told the Government of his suspicion about the supergun. But he contacted the police because he believed his home and his telephone were bugged by MI5. The security services, according to the documents, had not

carried out such an operation.

The MI6 documents are said to show that the agency became concerned that Mr Kock was becoming unstable. He moved from Kent to Scotland and surrounded himself with security devices. One night in January 1990 he fired a gun over the head of two men who were repairing a van shouting "I am a soldier you know".

Designer knitwear that won't keep you warm

By Melanie Rickley

KNITWEAR designer Laine Keogh showed her third collection at London Fashion Week yesterday. It was an opulent affair that owed as much to her Irish roots as it did to flights of fantasy in Tibet, India, ancient Egypt and Rome, and Morocco.

Keogh's creations are hardly recognisable as traditional knitwear; there are no jumpers, woolly hats and scarves; instead Keogh takes the most unusual yarns and transforms them into haute couture.

Filigree gold ropes, strips of linen, cashmere, steel and even hair were knitted, crocheted and woven into opulent belted robes in rich colours, and a back-lift, ostrich-feathered trimmed dress, together with other variations on dresses that resembled fishing nets.

The clothes were worn by some of the world's top models. Sophie Dahl also put in an appearance. Keogh's clothes are certainly beautiful, but limited in scope because of their price - £315 for a simple jumper and up to £5,000 for a crocheted dress. For this reason most of her fans are celebrities, including Demi Moore, Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell, and they are sure to love all the mossy soft cardigans, extravagant shawls and gold linen "chainmail" dresses.

As for the rest of us, we'll have to save up for a ostrich-trimmed cardigan by the time autumn comes around.

Photograph: Ben Elwes



Childcare equals better employees

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

NEARLY half of working parents feel their ability to do their jobs improved by using childcare, according to a survey.

The evaluation of the Out of School Childcare Initiative showed that 47 per cent of parents felt they had benefited because of the childcare they used.

Last week, *The Independent* launched its campaign for a tax allowance for working mothers, calling on the Chancellor to take action as affordable, high-quality childcare is the major barrier preventing women from returning to work.

Four out of five out-of-work mothers said that they would go out to work if they had the childcare of their choice, says the British Social Attitudes Survey. Yet many women feel that they cannot return to work after giving birth because

they cannot afford it. The Daycare Trust calculates those who do pay for care are paying on average £6,000 a year - more than for food or housing.

However, the benefits of childcare for families and the state are well documented. Nearly a third of the children in the UK live in poor households according to a report by Eurostat last year, more than in any other European country.

Social security budgets have risen inexorably to support the jobless, lone parent families and the low waged, says the Daycare Trust. Carefully targeted subsidies will help families move from benefits to work, providing social security savings.

"Women who bear children face an immediate loss of income and benefits that disadvantage them in terms of pay, living standards, pensions and job mobility," says Colette Kelleher of the Daycare Trust.

"Fifty-six per cent of women entrepreneurs said easier access to childcare would be the greatest benefit to help women launch their own business."

Cary Cooper, professor of organisational psychology at UMIST, says: "Some women feel they have to go back to work for their careers. Other women feel that by going back they are getting away from the pressures of being with children all the time and the status of having a good job will have a better effect on their parenting."

"They are also keeping in touch with their work and they feel it gives balance to their life. The problem is that we have the longest working hours in Europe, with 40 per cent of managers working at the weekend. If women go back working full time they may not be going back to nine to five but [to] far longer hours."

Letters, page 16

Childbirth guru adds her backing

By Glenda Cooper

Childbirth guru Sheila Kitzinger has joined our campaign to give working mothers tax allowances for childcare. "I am happy to support *The Independent's* campaign for tax relief for working mothers," she says. "This is a really important issue, and one that the Government cannot afford to ignore."

The e-mails, faxes and letters continue to flood in as readers express their views on *The Independent's* campaign.

In Saturday's paper we compared the UK's situation with other countries. A reader from Winchester, Marie-Christine Murphy-Bouthor (a French



Kitzinger: 'Government cannot ignore this issue'

citizen working in this country) tells us: "I am horrified with the cost of good quality childcare in the UK. When I tell my relatives in France they still find it difficult to believe me; surely England could not be still in the Dark Ages. I am 38 weeks pregnant. I have booked a crèche for my future baby; this will cost me £460 a month... In France the same quality of childcare would cost me between £100 and £200. And this amount would also be deductible from my taxable in-

come! And I would have £90 a month in terms of child benefit (twice the amount given in this country). My husband and myself are currently looking for a position in France or Belgium. In those countries we will certainly not be penalised for having a family."

Mandy Price, who works part-time and studies part-time, says care for her two children leaves her not much better off than if she was on income support: "If this Government does not make genuine policies to provide adequate and affordable childcare... the reality will surely be that many children are going to be cared for in an informal manner by friends, family, neighbours and, for the older generation, a return to the latchkey kids of the past."

Anne O'Connor, of London, calls for tax breaks not just for working mothers but those who work in the home, to be given recognition for the job of mothering: "What mothers need is a proper family allowance which would give them the choice of whether to work mainly in or outside the home."

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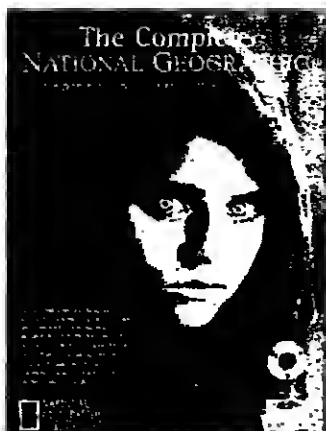
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DAILY POEM

Mozart's Grave

By Ivan V Lalic (translated by Francis R Jones)

A storm, they say, scattered the pitiful cottage
As a typesetter scatters the letters of an unwanted sentence;
A wet dog, the only witness
Of a job well done,

disappears
At the intersection of a rainy dusk and history:
Hence we have no real proof
That Mozart rests in peace
But the space trembles with music,

and a dog
Sometimes howls from a star
When it hears the stone step of the Guest.

The great Serbo-Croat writer Ivan Lalic died in 1996; he described himself not as a Serb or a Yugoslav but as a "Mediterranean poet", and took his inspiration from the region's culture. "Mozart's Grave" comes from *Fading Contact*, recently published by Anvil Press (£7.95).

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In balance: Buddhist monk YanTzi demonstrating his martial arts at Britain's first Shaolin temple in Islington, north London Photograph: Philip Meech

Kung fu monk puts a kick into Buddhism

By Clare Garner

HE HAS twice won the world champion title in martial arts, trained the Chinese special forces in kung fu, and personally "handled" a number of high-profile kidnaps. He is also a Buddhist monk, who meditates three hours a day and emanates an aura of calm.

Shi YanTzi, 30, is the senior instructor in China's Song Shan Shaolin Temple, the 1,500-year-old father of Zen Buddhist temples. He has been sponsored by the China Cultural Fund, a charity which forges links between East and West, to come to Britain to promote kung fu and Zen Buddhism. He will teach classes at the Temple School in Islington, north London, which, since it was blessed by his abbot last week, is the first Shaolin Zen Buddhist temple in the country.

The philosophy of his kung fu is, however, more complex than the aggressive martial arts portrayed in Bruce Lee films. Martial monks employ their art for self-control and self-defence, and complement the physical activity with meditation to achieve peace and harmony. For that reason they prefer the term "Shaolin arts of physical health" to kung fu.

The physical side is actually a balance of the mental side," Shi YanTzi explained yesterday. "It's just a balance of yin and yang. When you are training you bring out the full physical side like a tiger and when you do the Zen meditations it actually helps to calm the person down and balance the physical aggression."

YanTzi was born in northern China. He started training to be a monk at the Shaolin Temple at the age of 15. For the

first three years he was forbidden lessons in martial arts because he was supposed to concentrate on performing mental tasks and studying Buddhist scriptures.

He would, however, "sneak around looking at other martial monks, copying them". So desperate was he to "test out [my] ability", that he entered competitions under a false name. He won six championship titles and two world championship titles. When his tutors found out, he was punished.

One of the five basic Buddhist precepts is that one should not take life. "For 1,500 years Shaolin monks have been killing people," said Shi YanTzi, attempting to explain the apparent contradiction. "The mercy of the teachings in Buddhism is to suppress the evil side. If you don't kill to protect, how can you be merciful?"

Cheap rail fares on the way out

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

CHEAP walk-on railway fares are disappearing from the many lines on the national network as some private firms raise ticket prices by double the rate of inflation, according to a survey by an industry magazine.

A report by *Modern Railways* out later this week shows that since railway privatisation capped certain fares in June 1995, some private operators have increased their cheapest tickets by more than 20 per cent. Inflation over the same period was a little more than 9 per cent.

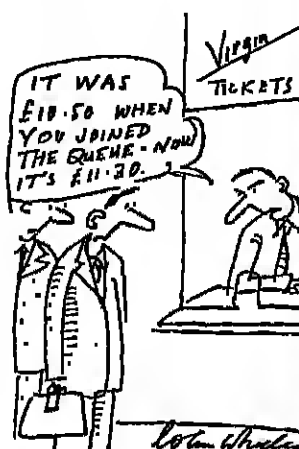
The study, of 17 private rail companies, fingers the much-criticised Virgin Trains, on its west coast service, as the worst culprit. It raised its SuperSaver tickets on average by 21 per cent.

Not much better was Midland Main Line - run by coach giant National Express. Passengers buying its cheapest walk-on fares saw increases, on average, of 16 per cent. The analysis, by ticket and timetable expert Barry Doe, used a "basket" of ticket prices to calculate an average for each operator.

The results were startling. In 1995, passengers travelling from London to Crewe on the then British Rail-run west coast line paid £30 for a SuperSaver return. With Virgin, travellers now pay nearly 22 per cent more for the same ride.

Midland Main Line has put up its cheapest walk-on fare on the London to Leicester service by 17.4 per cent - nearly double the rate of inflation - since 1995.

SuperSaver tickets, which can be used on any day except



Fridays and summer Saturdays, are viewed as the key off-peak fare for most passengers.

Mr Doe has pointed out that some SuperSaver fares have increased so much they are more expensive than less-restricted tickets. "Virgin was forced to reduce its Southampton to Thurso SuperSaver ticket when it an 18 per cent rise saw it become more expensive than its supposed cheaper Saver fare."

Virgin have made it clear that they view turn-up-and-go tickets as a relic of the past. Richard Branson's managers tried to abolish the SuperSaver fares last year. The company was forced to back down after passenger groups protested. In documents seen by *The Independent*, Chris Tibbits, managing director of Virgin Trains, admitted it aims to "encourage people to book in advance" and will cut the price of tickets reserved by telephone.

According to Mr Tibbits, "as long as customers book in advance it is likely they will save money." The company does offer very low fares if travellers book before they travel.

INCREASES OUT OF LINE

COMPANY	RISE	TICKET TYPE
Virgin Trains	21 per cent	SuperSaver
Midland Main Line	16 per cent	SuperSaver
Thameslink	15 per cent	Cheap Day
LTS Rail	14 per cent	Standard Single
Silverlink	13 per cent	Standard Single

Rises calculated from a basket of fares; inflation over period from June 1995 to January 1998 was 9.27 per cent

Southall delay risks repeat of disaster

By Randeep Ramesh

A REPEAT of last year's Southall train crash, which claimed seven lives, could occur while the public inquiry into the incident is delayed, lawyers representing the victims' families have claimed.

The inquiry was supposed to start today, but it will be opened and then adjourned because criminal prosecutions of the rail firms involved could follow.

More than 160 people were injured and seven lives lost when a packed InterCity train,

operated by Great Western, ploughed into a freight train run by English Welsh & Scottish last September.

Chris Mather, the lawyer heading the co-ordinating committee for the families of the those killed, believes that 12 months could pass in which another disaster could occur.

"If the reasons for the Southall crash are not investigated and addressed very quickly, there is a very real risk of a repeat of this horrifying accident," said Mr Mather, of the London firm Penningtons.

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Treasury highlights 'e-day' cash crisis

By Anthony Bevins and Diane Coyle

THE WITHDRAWAL of £25bn in notes and 100,000 tonnes of sterling coins currently in circulation would be required if Britain joined the European single currency, MPs were told yesterday.

A Commons memo on the practical plans for a euro changeover - already dubbed e-day by the Treasury - said that 1 January "would not be a suitable date for the introduction of euro notes and coins - a date in mid-February would be better, following the example of decimalisation."

"Most firms, consumers and employees would prefer a rapid changeover, to minimise the costs of handling two currencies. However, reducing the legal period of dual circulation to less than six months might cause public anxiety, particularly among special needs groups and the elderly."

But the memorandum, from the Treasury to the Commons Treasury Committee, then added: "The logistics would include withdrawing 100,000 tonnes of sterling coins and distributing 70,000 tonnes of euro coins, and switching £25bn of notes - with all the security implications that would entail."

The memo also said: "Steps to prepare for the introduction of euro notes and coins include: encouraging the public to bank or spend hoarded sterling stock in advance of e-day; encouraging employers to move to automated pay systems ahead of e-day; and pensions, benefits and other payments by national, regional and local authorities to be made in euro from e-day." Final plans for the

changeover, the memo added, would have to wait for a decision to join - and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has already said "that such a decision would probably not take place until after the next election".

But John Redwood, the Tory trade and industry spokesman, warned last night that a single currency would lead to a single government - making general elections "pointless".

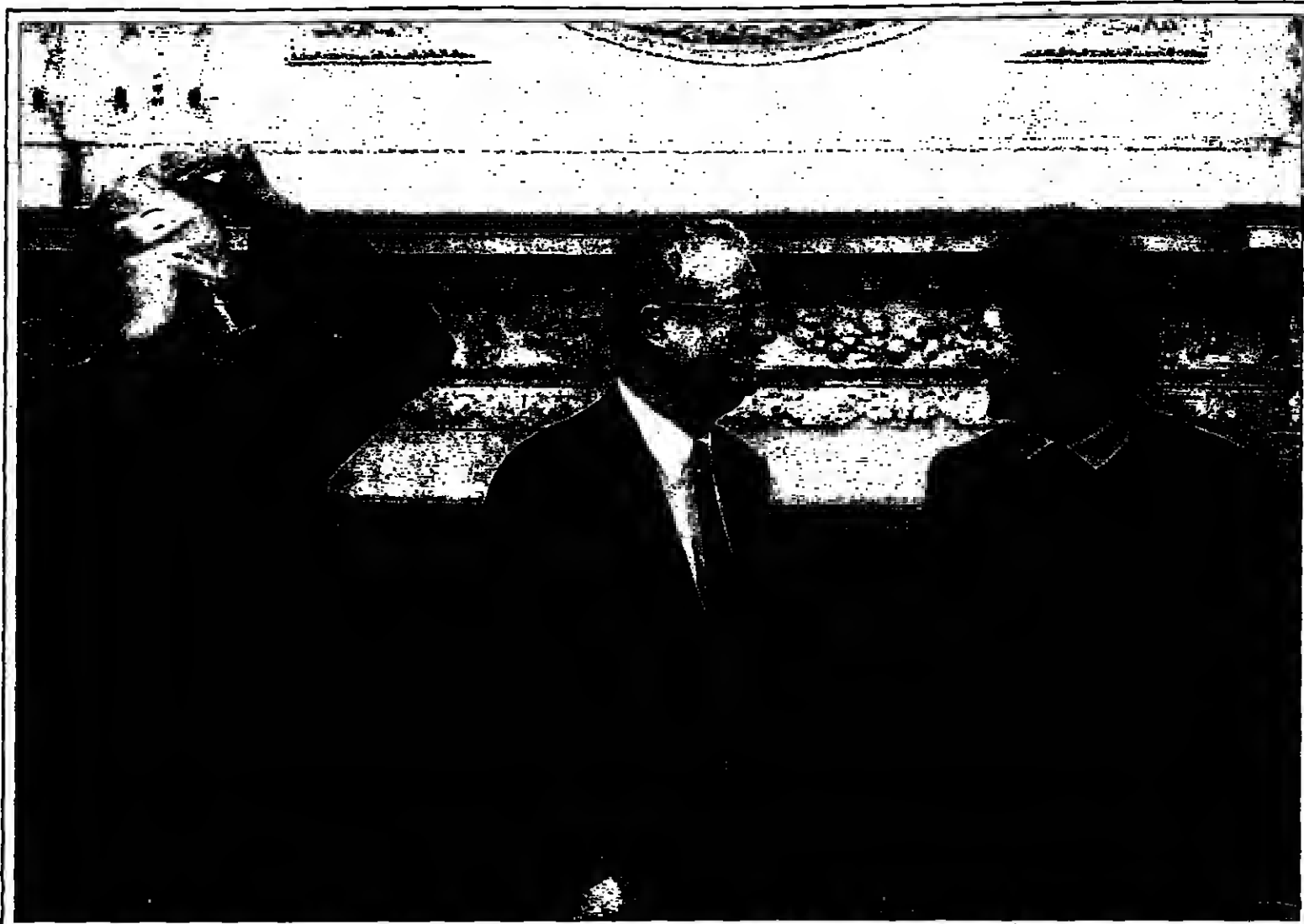
Mr Brown will be pressed to amplify his views about possible British entry into the single currency when he faces questions from the Treasury Committee today.

The MPs are likely to press him on whether the pound will need to rejoin the Exchange Rate Mechanism in order to qualify.

In addition, the Chancellor will be asked whether he agrees with Eddie George, the newly-reappointed Governor of the Bank of England, that some of the probable first-wave members are unlikely to have achieved real economic convergence by the start of next year.

Prompted by questioning by the Treasury committee when he gave evidence on Emu recently, Mr George said that in his personal view the economies of some countries, such as Italy, Spain and even France, had not converged in a sustainable way. Asked specifically whether they should qualify, he replied: "I have serious doubts about that."

Some City pundits had speculated that Mr George's scepticism - which he describes as "Euro-pragmatism" - had been a reason for Mr Brown, more of a Euro-enthusiast, delaying the Governor's reappointment.



Music maestro: Chris Smith, centre, the Secretary of State for Culture, greets Sir George Martin, centre, and rock star Mick Hucknall in the Cabinet Offices yesterday for the inaugural meeting of the Music Industry Forum. Photograph: John Voss

Needle exchange system for jails

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

HEROIN addicts in prison could be provided with clean needles in a radical shift of government policy aimed at curbing a rapid increase in hepatitis and other diseases among inmates.

The prisons minister, Joyce Quin, has asked officials to look into the possibility of setting up needle exchange schemes and to report back to her by the end of March.

The move came after figures showed a rise of almost 50 per cent in hepatitis C cases in prisons within a single year.

In the same year, a range of counselling and therapy schemes had been set up to help prisoners deal with drug ad-

iction. Ms Quin said in a written Commons answer that although she had "no plans at present" to introduce a needle exchange scheme, she had commissioned advice on the subject.

Last night, a Prison Service official said the possibility of setting up a scheme was under active consideration.

"I think we recognise that there's a problem there and it is being tackled through a group of officials. They will look specifically at the needle exchange scheme as one particular way round it," he said.

In answer to questions from Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West, Ms Quin revealed that the number of hepatitis C cases reported in prisons rose from 543 in

1995-96 to 760 in 1996-7. He said ministers should accept that drug abuse was endemic inside prisons and should tackle the problem accordingly.

"If hepatitis is spreading in prisons, so possibly is Aids. The cause is almost always people sharing needles. It can be curbed very simply and cheaply with needle exchanges," he said.

He said random testing schemes could actually be increasing the use of hard drugs in prisons. Because cannabis stayed in the system longer than heroin, prisoners knew it was safe to take heroin on a Friday because they would not be tested over the weekend. If they took cannabis, it might still register in tests conducted the following Monday.

In 1996-97, anti-addiction schemes were set up in 19 prisons around the country, ranging from counselling programmes to "therapeutic communities" in which prisoners with drug problems live separately and receive intensive treatment.

Those schemes have been evaluated over the past two years by PDM Consulting, who have recently presented a draft report to ministers. Although the findings have not been made public, it is known that the firm has looked both at schemes which aim to achieve total abstinence and at others which take a more pragmatic approach.

A spokesman for the Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust, which runs a programme

in several prisons called "Twelve Steps to Abstinence", said it broadly supported the idea of needle exchanges though it preferred its own approach.

"Our position is that people in prison should have the same drug treatment services as are available to them on the outside, and needle exchange schemes are one of them," he said.

A spokesman for the Scottish Prison Service, which allows prisoners free access to multi-purpose sterilising tablets, said he would not favour such a move because needles could be used as weapons.

"If a prisoner fills a needle with blood and takes a number of staff hostage, that is a very serious situation," he said.

Mad cow league table proposed

By Katherine Butler
in Brussels

EIGHT EU countries could be declared BSE-free, while seven others would be classified "at risk" under highly-contentious plans for a European mad cow league table being drawn up in Brussels.

European Commissioners meeting tomorrow will consider carving the bloc into three categories, high, low or risk-free.

Those, including Germany, which have never had a BSE case in a "native" herd, would not have to implement new rules banning cattle parts such as brain and spinal cord which could pose a danger to human health.

German ministers have already hinted at a political trade-off under which they would support the relaxation of the British beef export ban if Germany is declared a BSE-free zone.

The agriculture minister, Jack Cunningham, condemned foot-dragging by other EU governments reluctant to apply British-style health controls earlier this year, but amid signs that it could be the key to unlocking the ban on Britain, the Government now appears more receptive to the idea of a geographical carve up. "We are considering it" said a spokeswoman yesterday.

EU scientists are already collating data on the incidence of BSE in each member state with a view to identifying the highest-risk regions and countries.

Britain would be the most obvious candidate for high-risk status in any EU league table but Ireland, Portugal, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg which have all had confirmed cases would also have to be classed at varying degrees of risk.

At least one case has been detected in Germany but Bonn has gone to great lengths to prove that Cindy, the cow in question, came from Britain.

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Springtime in the city

2 for 1 hotel offer

INTER-CONTINENTAL
HOTELS AND RESORTS

The Independent and Independent on Sunday have joined forces with Inter-Continental Hotels to offer readers a unique 2 for 1 weekend promotion. Available at a selection of hotels in the UK and Europe, rates for these special weekends start from as little as £69 per room, per weekend and include breakfast for 2 each morning and all taxes and service charges. This fantastic 2 for 1 deal, which represents a 50% saving on the usual weekend rates, is available exclusively to Independent readers, and is on offer every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from now right through until the end of April 1998.

HOW TO BOOK
Simply collect 4 out of the 7 tokens we will be printing every

day until Friday 27th February. Choose the dates that you want to stay and telephone the Inter-Continental Central Reservation office on 0181 847 2277. Callers should quote 'The Independent Weekend Promotion' when making their booking. On your arrival at the hotel you should present your tokens in order to qualify. All bookings are subject to availability.

EASTER BONUS

As an extra bonus for Independent readers, these amazing weekend rates will be available throughout the Easter period at the London and Edinburgh hotels. The 2 for 1 deal (or 4 for 2 during Easter) will be on offer for a period of five nights, starting from Thursday 9th April right through to Monday 13th April inclusive.

Hotel Inter-Continental London

Located just off Park Lane, overlooking Hyde Park Corner and Buckingham Palace Gardens. With 455 elegantly decorated bedrooms and suites, a fabulous French Restaurant, informal coffee shop and modern health club and gym, the hotel boasts all the services and facilities you would expect from one of the capital's premier hotels. A brand new Club Inter-Continental executive floor is being launched in March.

Rate (per room per weekend) £189

May Fair Inter-Continental London

On Stratton Street, this five star deluxe hotel is perfect for reaching the Bond Street shops, royal parks, theatres and galleries. It offers superb accommodation and facilities including a stylish, contemporary restaurant, Opus 70, popular cafe, traditional pub and sophisticated piano bar. Its health club boasts a swimming pool, gym, saunas and so-

Rate (per room per weekend) £195

Churchill Inter-Continental London

In Portman Square in the centre of the West



Elegance and comfort at The George Inter-Continental, Edinburgh

End with the Oxford Street just two minutes walk. Recently renovated to the highest standards, the stunning Churchill Inter-Continental boasts luxurious accommodation, a superb restaurant, Clementines and a new Churchill Bar & Cigar Room. Guests have the use of a private tennis court just opposite the hotel.

Rate (per room per weekend) £189

The Forum Hotel London

Perfectly situated close to the shopping area of Kensington and Knightsbridge. With 27 floors, many of the hotel's 910 bedrooms and suites enjoy superb views over the London skyline. A wide choice of restaurants and bars include the Gloucester Road Deli with its authentic 'New York' atmosphere and the Kensington Garden Cafe.

Rate (per room per weekend) £129

The George Inter-Continental Edinburgh

This first class hotel occupies a classic Georgian Building dating from the 18th century. In the heart of the city, its 195 bedrooms and suites, enjoy superb views over the city and the Firth of Forth. Dining options include a choice of three restaurants and bars including the recently refurbished Carvers Restaurant, housed in one of the most spectacular dining halls in Edinburgh.

Rate (per room per weekend) £109

The 2 for 1 deal is also available at Inter-Continental and Forum hotels in Brussels, Berlin and Budapest. Special weekend rates are also available to a selection of other Inter-Continental Hotels in Europe including Paris, Vienna, Rome, Cannes and Prague (prices on application).

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To participate in the offer you must collect 4 differently numbered tokens from the seven we will print between February 21 and February 27. These tokens will be redeemable at any of the Inter-Continental and Forum hotels listed in The Independent and Independent on Sunday. All prices shown are per room per weekend (couple for two nights) including full English breakfast and VAT. All bookings must be made using the Inter-Continental Central Reservation line. These special weekend rates for a maximum 2 night stay are available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights from Friday 27 February until April 26 1998 (not include the Easter period as noted above). Rates are payable in local currency and do not include travel. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotion. All reservations are subject to availability.

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A fantastic choice of locations is available, and each of the participating hotels is perfectly located for the city's shopping areas, attractions and places of interest.

Mad cow
league
table
proposed

30 die as tornadoes tear into Florida

By Phil Davison
in Miami

AT LEAST 30 PEOPLE were killed when an unprecedented string of tornadoes, driven by the El Niño weather phenomenon, churned through the Orlando area of Florida before dawn yesterday, near Walt Disney World and other tourist attractions.

One television channel put the death-toll at more than 40. More than 250 people were hurt and several were missing in the worst disaster to hit Florida since Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and the worst tornado catastrophe.

Most casualties were in mobile-home sites, where at least a dozen twisters - weathermen lost count in the chaos - picked up homes and cars like a child tossing around toys. Rescuers, guided by helicopters with devices to seek the heat of bodies, freed several people trapped in buildings or debris.

Several tornadoes passed near Disney World, Sea World and the Universal Studios Hollywood theme park but none touched down and there were no immediate reports of casualties at the sites.

By yesterday evening it was not clear whether any foreign tourists were among the dead, injured or missing. One victim found after several hours was an 18-month-old baby, ripped from its father's arms when a tornado hit their home for

only a few seconds. In some areas it was as though a giant bulldozer had rumbled along a 200-yard wide path, flattening everything in its way.

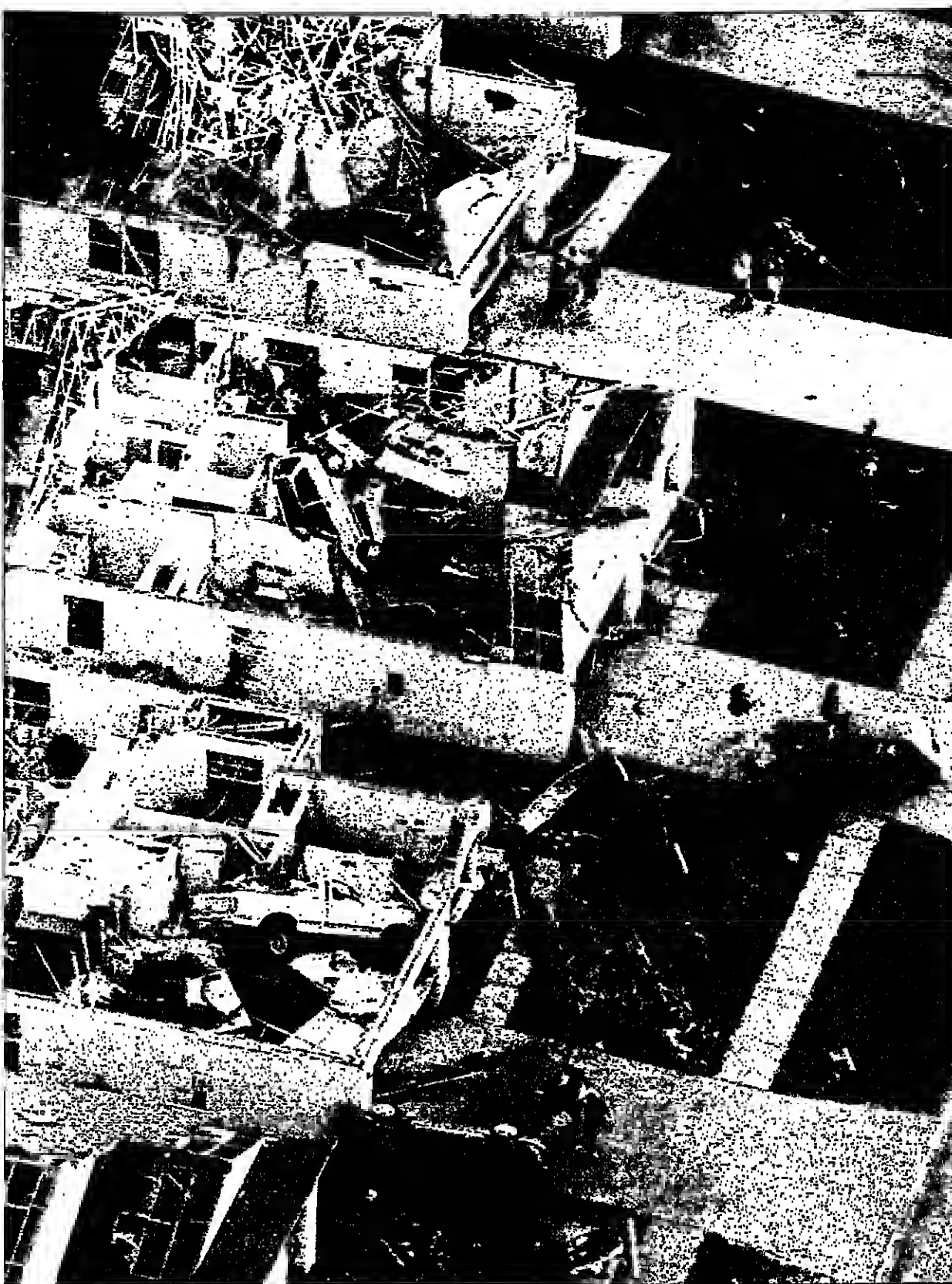
Winds of up to 250mph were enough to pick up articulated lorries, flip them over and scatter them along the main I-95 highway, which runs from the southern tip of Florida up the US east coast.

"I looked up and saw the stars. The whole roof was gone," said Eugene Walton, whose family house was destroyed. "If you saw the house, you'd wonder how we got out of their with our lives."

Joe Saz, who lives in a block of flats at Witer Garden, west of Orlando, said: "You could feel the whole apartment just shift. It just jumped to the right. Suddenly water started coming out of the walls, out of the light fixtures and there were screams coming from every direction."

Worst hit was Osceola County, where a 27-shop mall was mangled into a pile of twisted metal and jumbled concrete. "Had it hit during shopping hours," it would have been a catastrophe," said a resident.

President Bill Clinton, taking time off from his consultations on the Iraq crisis, sent the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, James Lee Witt, to the area. The Florida Governor, Lawton Chiles, also toured the stricken zones.



People returning to the remains of their homes near the Florida town of Kissimmee after the state had been battered by a series of tornadoes, the worst disaster since Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Photograph: Joe Skipper/Reuters

Albania sends in special forces to quell armed revolt

By Andrew Gumbel

THE Albanian government sent special forces into the northern town of Shkoder yesterday to put down an armed revolt by supporters of the former president, Sali Berisha. It followed a day of mayhem in which public buildings were burnt, shops looted, the police run out of town and 35 convicted murderers sprung from the local jail.

Interior Ministry forces broke through barricades set up in front of the bridge leading into town and forced about 60 insurgents to flee back into town. Last night the forces were still making arrests. There was no reliable news of casualties.

The revolt - the most serious disruption of public order since the Socialist-led government was voted into office last July - is symptomatic of a disastrous security situation in which the population is heavily armed, crime is one of the few lucrative ways to earn a living and many areas of the country remain under the control of mafia-type gangs.

The activities of Mr Berisha and his supporters have been of particular concern, especially in

the north, where their support is strongest. Two weeks ago, one of his henchmen, Azim Hajdari, provoked a firefight with police outside Shkoder after he refused to undergo a routine check at a roadblock. Several times in the past month there have been armed stand-offs between the government-appointed police chief, Mithat Havari, and a number of former policemen dismissed because of their suspected links to organised crime.

The latest revolt began on Sunday afternoon. A group of hooded men burst into the police station and opened fire, injuring at least three policemen and forcing the rest to flee. The rebels then began sacking the town, reminiscent of last year's anarchic uprising in the south against the Berisha government. They set fire to the town hall, the prosecutor's office, the courthouse, the police station and the university.

Banks were raided, shops looted and churches and mosques attacked. The ruling Socialist party accused Mr Berisha in parliament of inspiring the revolt. He said the mayhem was the government's fault.

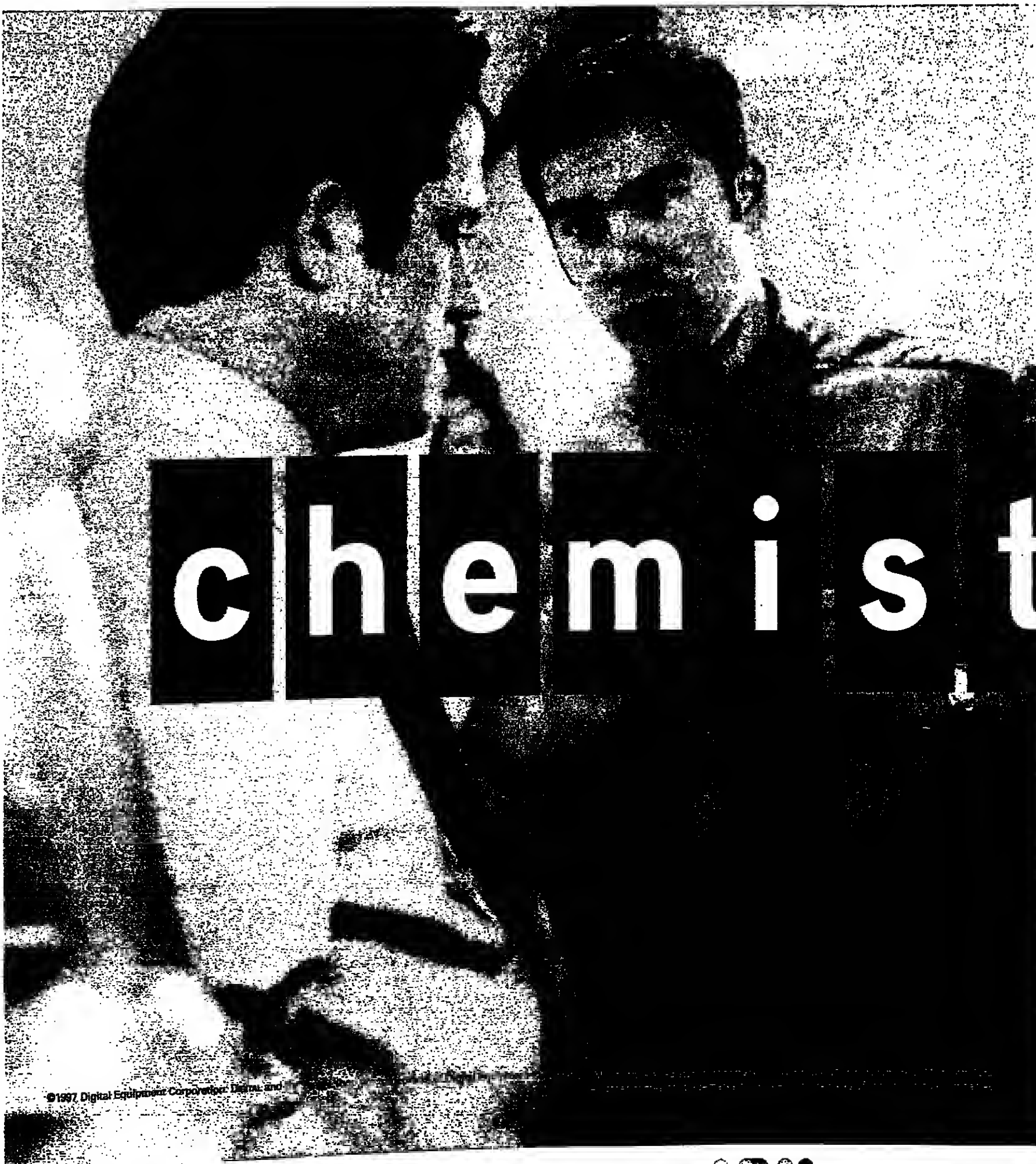
Film exposes child slavery

CHILDREN as young as five are being employed as slave labourers in sweatshops throughout Pakistan, according to filmed evidence to be presented today to the European Union, writes Katherine Butler in Brussels.

The film, made as part of an investigation conducted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, shows small children enslaved with their parents in brickmaking factories near Islamabad. Some of the families had been "sold" to the kiln by a former employer.

Ten-year-old boys who have worked in the kilns for five years appear in the film. One boy had no idea how old he was, having worked there since infancy. Another man said he would die a slave - he had been working in the kilns as a bonded labourer for 50 years.

The findings were released yesterday as EU foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels, backed demands by trade unions for the immediate suspension of trade concessions to Pakistan worth more than £2bn annually.



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The secrets which sparked the crisis

Robert Fisk in Baghdad reveals how the search for hidden documents led to the Gulf confrontation

A RUSSIAN diplomat who ignored his own government's wishes, and a secret 1996 decision by United Nations arms inspectors to uncover the very core of Iraq's weapons bureaucracy, led to the latest crisis between the United States and Iraq.

The dispute, which will be debated by the UN Security Council today, has its origins in the inspectors' hunt for the entire methodology of Iraq's arms security apparatus - the documents, working commissions and system of its arms production rather than the weapons themselves. Only by discovering the names and status of hundreds of Republican Guard commanders and officials of the Iraqi intelligence service, the UN decided, could it build up a picture of what biological or chemical weapons the Iraqis still intended to construct.

But the Iraqis fear the information would be handed on a plate to the Israelis. UN sources privately, but frankly, admit that there is no way they can guarantee that the information the UN is looking for will not be forwarded to Israel by its American allies.

The preposterous stucco palaces and ornamental lakes across Iraq which have become the focus of Bill Clinton's and Tony Blair's public fury are only incidental to the drama. What the inspectors - originally led by the tough and single-minded Nikita Svidovic - are looking for is the mass of documentation and personnel records that may lie in small buildings outside the palaces. It is the UN's "concealment inspections" that lie at the core of the potential war between the US and Iraq, a series of raids on Iraqi institutions which began in early 1996 to gain knowledge - not of the location of missiles or chemical factories, but of Iraq's system of weapons concealment.

In early 1996, Mr Svidovic was running Unscow - the UN Special Commission in Iraq. He had distinguished himself not only by his work on Scud missiles but by his discovery of gyroscopes that could have been used for the Iraqi missiles' guidance system. The Iraqis eventually revealed the gyroscopes, which had been hidden in boxes beneath the Tigris river. While Russia insisted, however, that almost all Iraq's long-range Scud missiles had been destroyed, the US claimed that locally manufactured short-range rockets of 150km radius were being redesigned to fire at far-away targets such as Israel.



Scott Ritter (in baseball cap) in Baghdad: inspections by Ritter, head of the Unscow concealment teams and a former major in the US Marines, were blocked by Iraq

lished a joint commission to co-ordinate a clandestine nuclear programme, abandoned after the 1991 Gulf war. The IAEA asked for the names of the commission, and repeated their request last October. Then Tariq Aziz announced that the nuclear commission never existed.

Mr Ritter was determined to continue Mr Svidovic's work on the methodology of Iraqi weapons production. The Iraqis have handed over thousands of documents on their biological programme, but claim to have lost two entire years' worth of records (from 1993 and 1994). Since the Iraqis kept their other papers with near-Teutonic efficiency, the UN suspects the "missing" papers are being withheld. Are they buried? Or in the buildings around the presidential palaces, so sacred to Iraq's sovereignty that UN inspectors have been refused entry? And what else is there? The names of the "non-existent" pre-war nuclear weapons commission?

One of Unscow's biggest problems is that Iraq's chemical or biological technology may be beyond the experience of individual inspectors. Thus, Mr Ekeus searched for "pure view data" - the conclusions of academics and researchers to discoveries made by Unscow's men. How much fertiliser, for example, would a country of 22 million people need? If the answer was lower than Iraq's import of fertiliser, further questions had to be asked. But if Unscow could get its hands on the documentary base of all this research and discover the layers of military and intelligence bureaucracy, then they would be able to go beyond the theoretical and discover the weapons the Iraqis have not even yet made.

If the palace outhouses contain the information Unscow needs, Iraq's refusal to admit Mr Ritter and his inspectors makes sense. If the same Iraqi military units and commanders could be identified, then so could new locations. Iraq asked for a 60-day time limit for palace inspections and then a certification that they were "clean". Unscow suspected they would start off "clean", but turn "dirty" afterwards when Iraq trucked its documents back in.

Iraq, which has all along believed that the US and Israel wished to destroy the regime, has every reason to keep its bureaucracy secret. Unscow is involved in the search for Iraqi weapons that may not yet even exist. In Saddam Hussein's eyes, the UN is now spying - on behalf of Iraq's enemies - into its military future as well as its past.

Mr Svidovic, apparently ignoring the political wishes of his employers in Moscow, began to notice that when he took his inspectors to sensitive military locations in Iraq, the same Iraqi military unit commanders showed up to watch them. American U2 photo-reconnaissance jets - which can "hover" over specific areas - were taking pictures of the military trucks which left these locations through back gates while Mr Svidovic was waiting at the entrance.

Interestingly, at the height of a later 1997 inspection crisis, the Iraqis threatened to shoot down U2s; the Russians offered to solve the crisis by providing their own aircraft - which did not have the same "hover" ability. The Americans turned down the offer and kept the U2s flying.

By May 1996, Mr Svidovic was being physically blocked from locations. On one occasion he had a gun held to his head by

an Iraqi officer. Within a month, Rolf Ekeus, then head of Unscow, came to Baghdad under pressure from the Russians to reach an agreement with Iraqi foreign minister Tariq Aziz. The agreement was more than faintly similar to the one which UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan took home from Baghdad yesterday. Iraq would recognise its obligations under UN arms inspection agreements and in return had the right to have senior officers present at Unscow searches.

UN sources said this agreement was violated within two weeks. But now the U2s, flying with US crews out of Saudi Arabia, were taking photographs which showed that the Iraqi trucks leaving military locations as Mr Svidovic's men approached bore identical number plates to lorries the inspectors were encountering elsewhere. Clearly, there was a coherent weapons concealment system in place. The Russians tried through

their UN ambassador, Sergel Lavrov, to put further pressure on Mr Svidovic to soften his inspections - which is why Mr Svidovic was quietly transferred from the Russian's payroll to Unscow's in 1997.

Mr Svidovic's replacement as head of the concealment teams was former US marine Scott Ritter, the man variously called a spy, abusive and arrogant in the Iraqi press. In fact, Mr Ritter's real importance goes back to the 1991 Gulf war when he was on General Norman Schwarzkopf's staff in Saudi Arabia. To the anger of the general, Mr Ritter voiced repeated doubts about the accuracy of US claims to have destroyed most of Iraq's Scud missiles. To General Schwarzkopf's fury, Mr Ritter was proved right.

Mr Svidovic may have annoyed the Iraqis, but at least he came from a friendly country - and wore a collar and tie. Mr Ritter turned up at military locations in

jeans and a baseball hat. A cultural as well as military animosity was inevitable. The man whose reports would reach the Pentagon - and thence, the Iraqis were convinced, Israel - could not even dress respectfully. Unscow's own frustration with Iraq was creating a lot of ill-will. According to UN sources, Iraqi excuses for failure resembled that of the schoolboy who claims the dog has eaten his homework.

In 1995, for example, the Iraqis themselves took Unscow inspectors to a chicken farm where biological warfare had been the subject of research - but only after Saddam Hussein's son-in-law Hussein Kamal had defected to Jordan. The chicken farm turned out to belong to Kamal. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) provided further evidence of evasion when it interviewed a senior Iraqi nuclear scientist who claimed his country had once estab-

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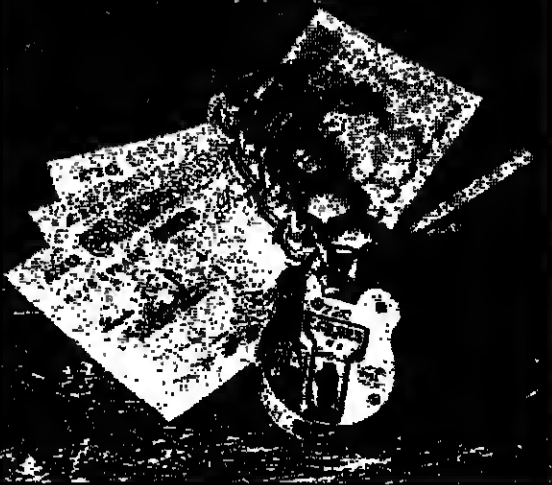
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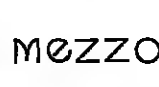
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Britain's firm line praised in Europe

By Steve Crawshaw in Brussels

THE DIVISIONS between France and Britain over Iraq remained clear to the very end. "If there'd been no pressure, there would have been no deal." That was how Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, commented on an agreed EU statement on Iraq yesterday. He made it clear that this referred to military pressure - which Britain has backed, but which France explicitly rejected.

An official statement issued after a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels attributed the agreement to the "firm resolve shown by the United Nations and the international community". Mr Cook noted that a "clear majority" - ie, not including France - backed the twin-track strategy of recent weeks, which combined diplomatic and military pressure. This was balanced in the statement by renewed emphasis, *à la française*, on the EU's "strong desire" for a diplomatic solution.

Mr Cook was chairing yesterday's meeting because Britain currently holds the presidency of the European Union. At the same time, Mr Cook spoke on the telephone to Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State, to co-ordinate the next moves. Britain hopes that a new resolution will be agreed at the United Nations, which will nail down the agreement reached in Baghdad. Such a resolution would allow for the possibility of military force if Saddam fails to comply with the agreement that has now been struck. The hope is that this continued pressure will dissuade Saddam from defying the UN at every turn. British officials insisted yesterday: "We can't be led up the hill every three months, in the way that we have been."

In a separate statement agreed in Brussels yesterday, the EU was eager to send friendly signals to the new Iranian leader, President Khatami, who is perceived as a moderate. Ministers talked of "encouraging" developments, and agreed that ministerial visits should be resumed between Europe and Iran. The ministers talked of "the longstanding interest in forging a constructive relationship with Iran". But British officials emphasised that there is no chance that Britain's ambassador will return to Tehran in the foreseeable future: Britain is currently represented in Iran by a chargé d'affaires. "While the *fatwa* [against the author Salman Rushdie] remains, that will be the case." Other EU countries are now once again represented at ambassadorial level.

Mr Cook, speaking on behalf of the EU, said that he "welcomed the first shoots of *glasnost* in Iran". Ministers decided that "a policy of exclusion would be counter-productive". The official statement merely listed "areas of concern", including weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and the *fatwa*.

The statement was a clear soft-peddling by comparison with the tough presidency statement issued 10 days ago, on the ninth anniversary of the *fatwa* imposed on Mr Rushdie. The issuing of the separate, earlier statement on Mr Rushdie made it possible for yesterday's "balanced statement" (in Mr Cook's phrase) to be almost needle-free.

EU to take softer stance on human rights in China

EU FOREIGN ministers agreed to take a less confrontational attitude to human rights in China. In view of the "first encouraging results of the EU-China human rights dialogue", the ministers agreed that neither the EU presidency nor individual states will table resolutions on China at the next UN Commission on Human Rights.

Robin Cook noted: "We didn't do a service to human rights by showing an EU which

was deeply divided" - a reference to arguments which made it impossible for Europe to press forward with a condemnatory vote at the UN Commission on Human Rights last year, when France refused to sign up for a draft EU resolution.

In effect, Europe has now retreated from further embarrassment of this kind. Less confrontational, an opening EU statement will "refer" to the human rights situation in China.



Regulation war accessory: An Israeli model takes off her gas mask temporarily during an outdoor photographic session in Tel Aviv yesterday

Photograph: Eyal Warshavsky/AP

War and peace: it's all in a day's work for Cook

Donald Macintyre trails the Foreign Secretary to EU meetings in Brussels. But Iraq is never off the agenda during a hectic 24 hours of geopolitics

1600 Sunday: Not knowing whether Britain will be at war next week, Robin Cook arrives at the VIP section of Edinburgh airport to board his RAF flight for Brussels. On board the aircraft he joins the officials accompanying him to Brussels, including his private secretary, Dominic Chilcott, and Nigel Sheinwald, his press secretary, and immerses himself in briefing for the European Union's foreign ministers' meeting the next day.

Mr Cook is accompanied on the flight, as for the General Affairs Committee he chaired in Brussels last month, by Gaynor Regan for whose trip he is personally paying. In Brussels she will keep discreetly out of sight until the flight home.

One topic above all dominates the conversation: Iraq, and the first reports filtering out of Baghdad is that Kofi Annan is close to a deal. Mr Cook "strongly resists" suggestions that he has been less hawkish than Tony Blair. He will later tell Alastair Campbell by phone that he was sorry to see "crap" to this effect in the newspapers and that it certainly didn't come from him.

But he is proud of Britain's role in persuading the US, after Washington's marked reluctance - or what one British official delicately describes as "inter-agency gridlock" - to back Mr Annan's mission to Baghdad. It was at a crucial meeting in London on St Valentine's day at which the plot to send Mr Annan to Baghdad with a clear mandate was agreed, between the FCO's Middle East Regional Di-

rector Derek Plumbly and his US and French counterparts. 1915 Sunday: Mr Cook arrives at the large and elegant official residence in the Rue Ducale of Sir Steven Wall, the British representative to the EU. At the time of the last Gulf War, Sir Steven was even closer to the centre, working for John Major in the private office at 10 Downing Street. But now the crisis has come to him, in the hark form of the Foreign Secretary.

In the privacy of a cramped cloakroom off the hall, Mr Cook takes a call from Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State. At last, some first-hand news. Mrs Albright has spoken by telephone to Mr Annan, who believes he has a deal which can be made to work. In a few minutes he is briefing the Prime Minister - who has spoken to President Clinton - on the Albright call.

The British are now clear that Mr Annan has a deal which he thinks can work. But Mr Annan has been hesitant to give the details over the telephone. Neither the British nor the Americans are yet clear whether Saddam Hussein is for real on the issue of Uncom's free access to the compounds of the so-called Presidential Palaces, which are believed to house facilities for making, storing or documenting biological or chemical weapons. Mr Blair and Mr Cook agree to be cautious and stick to

the line that they will need to see the fine print.

By this time Sir Steven is edgy. Three EU Commissioners are waiting to have pre-dinner drinks with Mr Cook and they are running out of small talk. But Sir Steven also knows he cannot do other than wait. After dinner Mr Cook starts a briefing meeting with senior officials, including Sir Steven, the FCO's political director, Jeremy Greenstock, and Emrys Jones Parry, the senior European man in London, on the next day's Council.

He runs through the business - China, the EU, Cyprus and Iran. But Iraq can't stop intruding. First, it is a topic for the Council meeting. Despite their agreement to the British-sponsored UN resolution in New York, the French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, is likely to be difficult. Mr Cook muses that given what is happening in Baghdad, "perhaps Iraq will go through smoothly. But I can't believe we'll get away without a tour de table." He's right. Tomorrow it will take him two hours to get an agreed text insisting unequivocally that President Saddam must conform to the latest deal.

Then it's time for another call from Mr Blair - and this time he has spoken to Mr Annan, who is still reluctant to spell out the details on a telephone line from Baghdad. But he is

firm now that he has a deal which stays above the bottom lines the Security Council armed him with when he went to Baghdad. It is President Saddam who has done all the conceding. Tired but cheerful, Cook asks Sir Steven for an orange juice to take to bed.

0830 Monday: This is the moment everyone has been waiting for. A resigned Jürgen Trittmar, Secretary-General of the European Council, has his fifth-floor office in the Justus Lipsius EU building taken over by Mr Cook and his team so they can watch the Annan press conference on CNN.

When the press conference is delayed for half an hour Mr Cook thinks about whether he should go on the *Today* programme - but not for long. As he points out, even if the press conference hasn't happened by then (which by the time he does speak to Sue MacGregor, it has), "I would be very nervous about leaving a vacuum for others to fill." He doesn't want random MPs and others going on to the radio and saying this agreement shows there should never have been the threat of war, for example. "It would be better to fill the vacuum with sledge than not fill it at all."

When Mr Annan begins to speak there is palpable tension as Mr Cook sits shirtless behind Mr Trump's ultra modern steel tube and glass desk.

green Pentel poised over a blank sheet of paper. Mr Annan is lavish in his thanks to President Saddam and Tariq Aziz for his reception in Baghdad.

The officials are impressive but there is an unspoken question hanging in the air. What if Mr Annan has suddenly shifted ground - making fools, especially of the British who had urged the US to back the Annan mission? But then he says boldly in answer to a question that diplomacy is most effective when it is backed by "firmness and force". Mr Cook visibly relaxes; a smile plays on his lips and he begins noting Mr Annan's words.

Mr Cook says later: "If there had been no pressure on Saddam, there would have been no deal from Saddam." He still insists the Government cannot be certain until today's meeting in New York, when the Security Council will discuss the text. But he is hopeful. "A diplomatic solution was always my preferred option," he says.

The day seems over - but Mr Cook still has an EU General Affairs council to chair. And a lunch of all 15 Foreign Ministers. And a press conference at the end of it. And three meetings with the Baltic states. Then another press conference. Somehow he has to fit in - at lunchtime - one more call to Mrs Albright. She was in bed in Washington when Mr Annan was speaking in Baghdad and Cook gives her all his impressions. The line is agreed. It's been a long day, but Mr Cook files home at 10pm a lot more optimistic than when he arrived.

Baghdad agreement awaits the UN seal

By David Osborne in New York and Anthony Bevins in London

THE AGREEMENT reached at the weekend by Kofi Annan and the Iraqi leadership should become clear this morning when the Secretary General, on his return from Baghdad, will lay it out before a meeting of the UN Security Council.

If it satisfies the council, then work will start immediately on a new UN resolution to give legal standing to the text - and spell out to Saddam Hussein the consequences of a failure to honour it. Debate within the Council could quickly become contentious.

A first outline of the the Annan deal was sketched out to representatives of the five permanent Council members, including Britain and the United States, at the UN headquarters last night. Officially, however, the full scope of the deal will only become known when Mr Annan briefs the full Council today.

There was discernible optimism in New York that the package will indeed be enough to satisfy Council members that Iraq has yielded to demands that it comply once again with UN resolutions and allow the work of the Special Commission on weapons inspections in Iraq (Uncom) to proceed unim-

peded. Council members will be anxious to hear the reaction of Richard Butler, the chairman of Uncom, who is due to return himself to Iraq next week. Mr Butler will be asked to express a view on whether the deal is workable or whether it in some way pollutes the integrity of Uncom's work.

There are no technical or legal requirements for the Council formally to respond to the Annan package. But diplomats in New York underlined yesterday the importance of a new UN resolution to acknowledge the Annan agreement and give it some legal foundation.

"Assuming that this deal is acceptable, then all of us will be anxious to nail it down," one European official said. He noted that there was no Council resolution following the Russian-backed deal that ended the previous Iraqi stand-off last November, and that that agreement unraveled swiftly thereafter.

There is a risk, however, that in debating such a resolution, the Security Council could once more expose its own divisions on the long-term handling of the Iraq situation.

Britain, in particular, will be seeking "the authority" of the Security Council resolution to allow a rapid UN response.

"by whatever means necessary", to any further breach of agreement by Saddam Hussein.

"It is important he is held absolutely to any agreement and that the allies can respond quickly to any further breach without needing to go through the various diplomatic rigmaroles," the Prime Minister's official spokesman said yesterday. "The key thing is to make sure he cannot do this again. We cannot keep moving planes and aircraft-carriers to the region every time he chooses to misbehave."

Asked about the implicit suggestion that the authority of a UN Security Council resolution would have been required for any further military action against Iraq, the spokesman said there had been different interpretations of the position.

The Foreign Office last week insisted that military action could have been carried out under existing resolutions, but the latest government position suggests that a specific resolution is now required.

It was not known what position the Government would take if the Security Council rejected an attempt to build approval for military sanctions into a new resolution - something that is entirely possible.



A Jordanian kissing a portrait of Saddam Hussein during a demonstration in Baghdad yesterday in support of the Iraqi regime

US stays silent and wants to see details

By Mary Dejevsky in Washington

AS A MAJORITY of countries hailed yesterday's agreement between the United Nations and Iraq, the United States kept a studied silence, warily reserving judgement until it had access to the full details. Whether from the White House, Congress, or media pundits, the message was a non-committal and sometimes peevish: "wait and see", "show me", "the devil's in the detail".

President Bill Clinton diverged only briefly from a scheduled address to state governors to say that he had been "working on the deal" and was consulting US allies. He had already had "a long talk" with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and was planning calls to the French President, Jacques Chirac, and Russia's President, Boris Yeltsin.

"We want to see the details," said a White House spokesman. Administration officials, including the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and Defense Secretary, William Cohen, who spearheaded recent efforts to persuade the American public of the need for air strikes on Iraq, were also holding back, apparently waiting for the President. Only the National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, evinced op-

timism, saying the Administration would be "very pleased" if the agreement met US demands.

These include "full and unfettered access" to all suspected sites for UN weapons inspectors in Iraq, no time limit for inspections and no Iraqi veto on the composition of inspection teams.

From Congress, the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, reiterated that any agreement must meet these requirements. He also called for "very significant penalties" for future non-compliance to be built into any new UN resolution on Iraq, which the US is expected to press for in the Security Council.

Mr Gingrich echoed a view widespread in US political circles that even if the immediate crisis was over, a new stand-off was likely within a month or two. Senator John McCain, Republican chairman of the Senate armed services committee, said in the short term "we have averted a situation where American lives would have been lost", but "in the long term, ... I have received no indication Saddam Hussein has changed his commitment to acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction". The Senate Republican leader, Trent Lott,

described Kofi Annan's mission to Baghdad as an example of "how the Administration's foreign policy is subcontracted to others" - ie the United Nations.

Both Mr Clinton and Mrs Albright had tried to head off domestic criticism of US policy in recent days by introducing the notion of the US "national interest" to justify US military action. Mrs Albright told a television interviewer on Sunday that the US reserved the right not to observe an agreement between the UN and Iraq if it did not correspond to US interests. Previously, Mr Clinton had stressed that the US was acting only in the framework of UN resolutions.

Any agreement now presents the United States with a dilemma. Commentators noted yesterday that the US risked finding itself "in a bind" with international opinion: saddled with an inadequate agreement, but unable to act for political reasons. With more than 30,000 troops, hundreds of planes and dozens of ships on alert in the Gulf region, the US has flaunted its preparations for military action to the point where failure to act risks being interpreted as a US climbdown. But the political cost to the US of acting unilaterally is higher now than it was before the agreement.



Star attraction: Maria Callas was one of the many great names to perform at Venice's La Fenice opera house

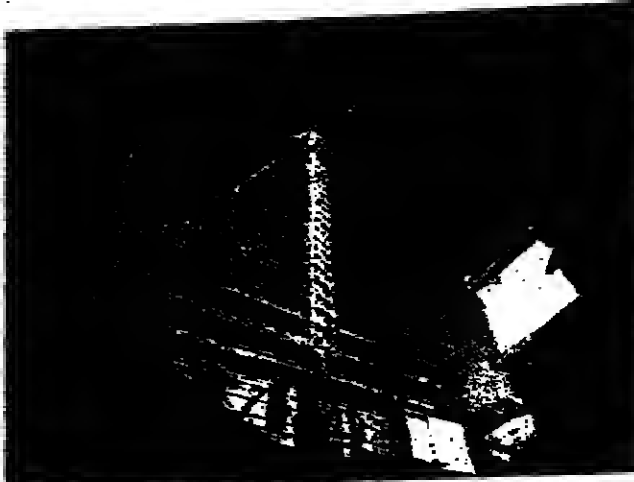
Venice's grand opera descends to farce

By Andrew Gumbel in Venice

TWO YEARS on from the fire that left it gutted, Venice's La Fenice opera house - The Phoenix - was doing a remarkable job of living up to its name and rising from the ashes. Until last week, that is.

Eight months into the rebuilding, work has come to a halt following a ruling from the Council of State that the competition for the rebuilding contract was conducted improperly.

The company that won the competition has been disqualified and ordered off the site. The government commission charged with the reconstruction of La Fenice - which in its heyday attracted such stars as Maria Callas - has been forced to start its paperwork from scratch. All over town, red-faced officials have been



A dispute has brought rebuilding work to a halt on La Fenice opera house (left), which was gutted by fire

Photograph: David Rose

incompetence or, as many Venetians suspect, an indulgent attitude towards Impregilo, a subsidiary of Italy's biggest and politically most powerful industrial conglomerate, Fiat.

All the evidence suggests the city intended to include the residential housing in the new Fenice project: councillors had even written to the residents, warning them that they might have to sell. Once the competition was launched, Holzmann specifically asked Mr Barboti's predecessor as prefect, Giovanni Troiaoli, whether the housing should be included. He replied with a circular letter to all entrants saying it should, "from the roof down to the ground".

It appears that Impregilo relied on an ambiguity in the circular referring to "the south wing of the theatre", not the south wing of the building as a whole. During the adjudication process, Holzmann's project - by the late Aldo Rossi - was deemed the most pleasing, aesthetically speaking, but Impregilo won because its short-cut made the reconstruction faster and cheaper.

Foul play? If nothing else, the fiasco has embarrassed Mr Cacciari and his image as a straight-dealing, competent mayor. "If anyone has messed up I want to know about it," he thundered as the building site closed last week.

The affair has infuriated the management at La Fenice, which until now has maintained a full programme of events at its temporary home, a prefabricated tent of a theatre erected on Il Tronchetto, an island built on an old rubbish tip that is now the biggest car park in Europe. After the fire, the so-called PalaFenice went up in three weeks, defying the odds to get the 1996 season started on time.

For the reopening, La Fenice had scheduled Riccardo Muti to conduct a choral concert, followed by a production of *Tristan and Isolde* directed by Bob Wilson. "We have to plan our seasons two years in advance, but now we don't know where we stand," said theatre spokesman Cristiano Chiarot. His desk was strewn with requests from foreign embassies and big companies for opening night tickets. For now, they are going to have to remain unanswered.

to throw away billions of lire," fumed the mayor of Venice, Massimo Cacciari.

The dispute centres on an apparently minor part of the project - a house attached to the Fenice building which is not part of the theatre and which was undamaged by the fire. Impregilo, the construction company that won the contract, left the house out of its plans, while all the others put it in.

The Council of State argued that the Impregilo proposal was incomplete and should never have been taken into consideration. The building site will have to be turned over to the second-placed company, an Italo-German consortium, led by Philip Holzmann, of Munich. It remains to be seen how much of the completed work will have to be demolished, and how much of the building gear, painstakingly assembled by barges plying the narrow canals, can be kept on site.

In the best of cases, the reconstruction will be put back months, shattering dreams of a grand millennial reopening. Impregilo will have to be paid several billion lire for work completed and the city will be forced to buy the house adjacent to the theatre, half of which is in private hands and occupied by long-standing residents.

The Venice authorities could appeal against the Council of State ruling, but this would be so risky and time-consuming that they have decided not to. "Our plans for the inauguration in December 1999 are definitely sunk. If we're lucky we'll have the theatre ready in the spring or summer of 2000," said the prefect of Venice, Vincenzo Barbati, who is also the commissioner in charge of rebuilding.

It is tempting to interpret the Council of State decision as bureaucratic chess-playing. But closer inspection of the competition procedure suggests the Venice commission made some strange decisions - the result of

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Deal struck in row over Nobel landmine activist

JODY WILLIAMS, co-ordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, has been eased into a largely ceremonial post at a conference of the organisation in Frankfurt. Ms Williams, who shared last year's Nobel Peace Prize with the movement she helped found, was stripped of her title and named one of three "international ambassadors". Relations between Ms Williams and the movement became strained after she refused to donate her share of the Nobel Prize to the campaign.

— Imre Karacs, Bonn

18 die in Algeria train blast

A BOMB exploded under a train, killing 18 people and injuring 25, Algerian state radio reported. The bomb was set off near El Affrouche, 12 miles from Algiers. There was no claim of responsibility but the area was known for attacks by the Armed Islamic Group. Bombs also ripped out a section of Algeria's biggest gas pipeline, an industry source confirmed.

— AP, Algiers

PW Botha sticks to his guns

PW BOTHA, South Africa's former president, told a court he had committed no crime by refusing to testify about the war against majority rule. He is accused of failing to honour a subpoena to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

— Reuters, George

Croats terrorise refugees

CROATS made fascist salutes and burnt Serbian symbols at a rally intended to intimidate Serb refugees in eastern Croatia. Eastern Slavonia was UN-administered for two years and returned to Croatian rule last month.

— Reuters, Zagreb

Kidnappers granted talks

PRESIDENT Eduard Shevardnadze agreed to meet a representative of gunmen holding three UN observers and their Georgian driver hostage. The gunmen support the former president Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

— AP, Dzikhaskari

Mussolini's car up for sale

THE car that Mussolini and his mistress used in their failed attempt to flee Italy in 1945 will be sold next month, Brooks auctioneers said. The 1940 Fiat 2800 Berlinetta is believed to be one of only three built and the only one to survive.

— Reuters, Geneva

Teen love gets serious

Children are having sex younger than ever. So why do so many not use contraception?

Ann Treneman finds out

EVERY morning 13-year-old Aaron Melville gets up and watches *Teen* with the prospective mother of his child, 16-year-old Susan Turner. Sometimes they join the *Teen* models in having a bit of toast. Then Aaron goes to school and Susan settles down in front of the television. "Susan loves cartoons," says Aaron, who is saving £5 out of his pocket money every week for the baby.

Their story should have been just another childhood romance. Aaron teased Susan - a classmate at Bell Baxter School in Cupar, Fife - about her shoes. "He'd run along the corridor shouting 'shiny shoes, shiny shoes'," says Susan. "I liked him. He was really cute." So cute, in fact, that they started going out together. They say things went slow at first. "We started going out on 28 February, we first kissed at the end of March. Things didn't get really serious until May," says Aaron. Things got really serious, though, after Susan got pregnant during a caravanning holiday.

Their parents were shocked - though they too had been on that caravanning holiday - not at the sex but at the lack of contraception. "I thought they were using contraception," says Aaron's mum. But, Susan explains, she wasn't on the Pill and she hates condoms. Now she is busy drawing up a schedule for Aaron to follow after the baby arrives at the two-bedroom council house they share with Aaron and his parents in Auchtermuchty.

They told their story yesterday to the *Daily Mail*. It was a good day to do so, for, running alongside, was the paper's lead story of the day, headlined "One in 10 Girls on Pill by 15". Clearly Susan was one of the nine who wasn't. As such, she provided a welcome blast of reality to match the *Mail*'s blast of morality.

No parent likes to think that their child is having sex, and yet Brook Advisory Centres say that the age at which young people today report their first experience of sex is 14 for girls and 13 for boys. (The age at which a majority of 16 to 24-year-olds lost their virginity was 17, however).

Reasons for this vary from the fact that puberty arrives earlier these days - many eight-year-old girls are now considered pre-pubescent - to the fact that we live in a "Wonderbra" society where sex is used to sell everything from ice cream to insurance. Teenage magazines are bursting with advice on the subject (as well as featuring some rather inventive sexual positions to have a go at). Sex and young girls is everywhere. In fact, if you had turned a few pages in yesterday's *Mail* you would have found another example in a story about a 12-year-old model in full make-up and very few clothes. "What kind of mother would allow a daughter of 12 to pose like this?" asked the headline.

Good question - though it must be said that the paper did run a rather large picture of said daughter - and many of the same people I spoke to yesterday who thought it only sensible that young girls having sex obtain contraception were much less comfortable with the idea of a 12-year-old in sexy clothing. But, though that is an extreme example, today's teenagers do grow up in a sex-saturated world and it is hardly surprising that they are so keen to try it.

"We have a snigger approach to sex," says Phillip Hodson, agony uncle and author of the book *What Kids Really Want to Know About Sex*. "We make it sound so in-

teresting. I mean, what are we talking about here? There are something like 42 basic positions and only so many things you can do. You can reduce this whole thing in a matter of boredom if you try. Instead we give it all of these almost magical properties."

The *Mail*, however, lives in a much simpler world, though it is not necessarily an accurate one. The Department of Health yesterday had tracked down the study used in the contraception story and said the figures were released three weeks ago. It showed that 59,000 girls under the age of 15 - i.e. one in 10 - did make contact with a family planning clinic. But, of those, only 23,000 actually sought advice on the Pill and other methods. "That means that 3.9 per cent of under 16s or, to be precise, one in 25.5 sought this," said a Department of Health spokesman.

Not exactly one in 10. Nor, according to Brook Advisory Centres, are any girls handed the Pill with no questions asked. "It's not like we are out on the street handing out contraceptives to teenagers who are not already having sex," says Alison Hadley of Brook. She says that 98 per cent of the girls who come to the centres are already sexually active. "Recent research shows that up to a third of under 16s are sexually ac-

tive. If only one in 10 are attending clinics for advice and contraception, clearly many more should be asking for help."

The Government would agree. Britain has the highest level of teenage pregnancy in Europe and the Department of Health has set up two working groups to study unwanted pregnancies. They are due to report to a mini-summit this spring and it is safe to say that we pay too high a price for teenage pregnancy for it to join those who want clinics banned from giving contraception to under-16s. "If they are going to have sex, then it is best that they do so safely and don't fall pregnant," said a Department of Health spokesman.

It is sensible advice, and all evidence shows that it is only sex education that manages to delay teenage sex. Here, perhaps Britain can learn from Holland, where there is a prime-time TV programme, called *Sex With Angela* for "sex starters". In Holland they are called sex starters. "In Holland they are called sex starters," says Phillip Hodson. "You simply couldn't do it here." And that is too bad, because it is precisely the kind of thing that a young girl named Susan Turner who likes cartoons might have seen before she decided she didn't like condoms and got pregnant instead.

PRETTY SCHOOLGIRL OR SEX OBJECT?

ELIZABETH PRESTON, who turns 13 today, is a young model with her eye on the big time. She wants to be a Kate Moss or a Naomi Campbell and sees nothing wrong with having posed in scanty clothing as part of that aim. Nor, it seems, does her mother.

"When I saw the first modelling picture I just thought she looked beautiful. I honestly believe if you have it, use it," she said yesterday. She refused to comment on criticism from family groups that she was not protecting her daughter.



Sarah Thomas: Left school early to model

Yesterday the London agency that has signed Elizabeth defended the photographs, dismissing claims they made her look like a sex object. "This has all been taken out of context. We took 200 shots and this is the only one

that looks like that. We are not projecting her as a vampish woman. She is a lovely, very mature 13-year-old," said Phil Jeremy of Model Plan.

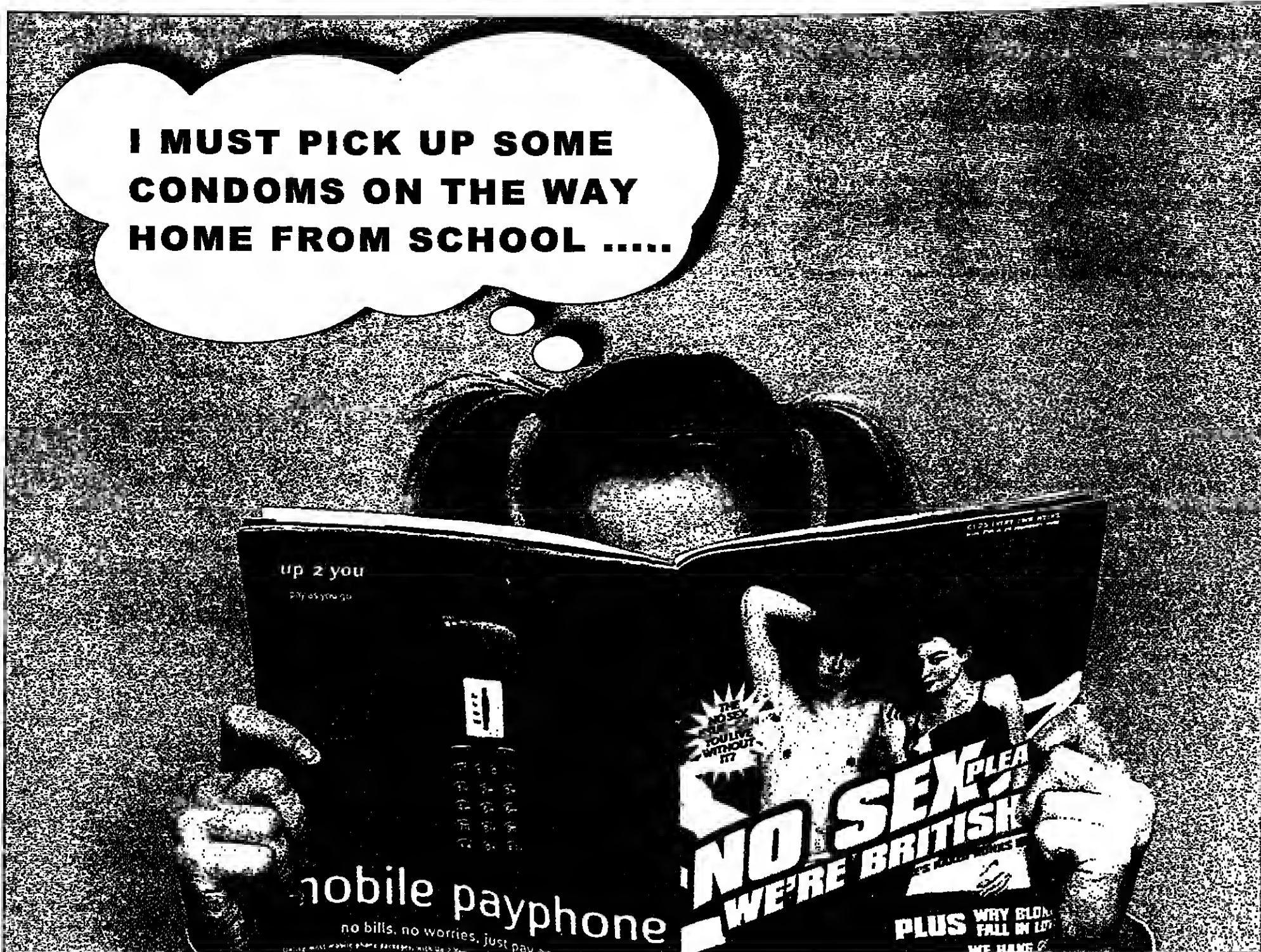
He pointed out that the feature in the *Daily Mail* was supposed to be a "lifestyle" feature. Instead, the paper chose to make a moral issue of it.

He says that so far Elizabeth has gone on some "go sees" during half-term last week. The agency would be looking for her to work for teenage magazines and clothing catalogues. Her mother plans to send her to college in Winchester to take A-levels, leading to a degree in music and drama. "Of course, that may change if my modelling takes off," adds Elizabeth.

You can count on it, and she wouldn't be the first, though she would be among the youngest. Vivienne Westwood caused a storm at last year's London Fashion Week for using 13-year-olds on the catwalk. Model Rachel Kirby was "discovered" at the age of 12. Even the industry sees such

young girls as vulnerable - especially in this age of heroin chic. Older models, such as Paula Hamilton, have called for laws to safeguard young girls. She started modelling at 15 and developed a cocaine habit that took years to beat.

Last year, Sarah Thomas, from the Norfolk village of Swardston decided to leave school, five months into A-level studies in maths, physics and design technology. She has since landed a lucrative contract to promote shampoo on American television. The deal puts her in the same bracket as supermodel Yasmin Le Bon.



Youngsters are bombarded with images of sex in glossy magazines. Little wonder they're so keen to try it

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

The jacket fitted. Now I was James Dean

REVELATIONS: PHILL JUPITUS

The time: Autumn 1993
The place: Lakeside Shopping Centre, Thurrock, Essex
The man: Phill Jupitus, comedian

THE THING that changed my life was buying the jacket I am wearing. As a kid my mum dressed me and when I started choosing my own clothes we were in the hinterland of flares and hipsters. As a chubby person, they just did not belong on me. Your leg flares in an inverse proportion to your trousers so you look like an elephant. I would go down Pitsa market to buy clothes - a Moroccan bazaar which in my eyes had everything. It was the zenith of style in Essex. You could buy things like patches with amusing slogans to sew onto your jeans. I had one from the "my other car is a Porsche" school of wit. I start buying my own gear at 17 and it was a nightmare. I remember going out with my first girlfriend and I was wearing one of my mother's jumpers with a big collar, a combat jacket, flares and green flash plimsolls. I was

standing in the queue of Basil-don's ABC cinema and a guy came up and asked whether I was a girl. So I got a haircut and started copying the jeans and T-shirts my mates were wearing - but it was never a look. It never felt personal.

Through the Eighties all these great fashions were going by but nothing was clinging to me and making me feel good. Even working in the music industry I never could get my clothes together. I was on the road with the Housemartins in an unstylish capacity. Fortunately they were also not renowned for their fashion sense so I did blend into the anorak melée of the day. At the time it was considered shallow to go with Peter York and the Saville Row look - we were all too angry to go shopping!

At 31, I left the record company and started doing stand-up, which made me even more aware of my appearance. Now I really did need to find "the look" because I was doing four or five gigs a week. The London comedy circuit was very much



the province of the jeans and the loose casual shirt, which I went along with. I tried an Oxford suit but it didn't feel right. Nothing made me feel special. In 1993 I went shopping with my wife in Lakeside and decided to buy a leather jacket. The terrible thing with "extra large" in this country, and I'm not just saying this because I'm big, is that it's just a variety of medium. I tried on an "extra large" in British Home Stores, but crushingly it was too tight. I became disheartened and gave up on the idea of a leather jacket. Then my wife was looking at some clothes in Next and my young cousin

Kelly spotted some more jackets. I told her they would never fit me but she insisted that I tried one on. I went over, slipped into this jacket - it was loose! I zipped it all the way up and it was nearly baggy. I looked on the label and it was just an "extra large". I expected it to have come from the rack with "freak" or "hefty" outcasts written above it. I waited for Beadie to leap out and shout, "You've bought the big stupid jacket." From the start, I just felt it was mine. Being so used to delving and digging or going to specialist shops, it was wonderful to be in clothes from a normal high street shop. Something else that gave me a boost - which is quite pathetic - is that after buying the jacket I read a copy of *FHM* and it was listed in the top 10 jackets. I thought, this is me: I'm that big fat bloke in the leather jacket. My stand-up had previously been quite slow and low key, now at certain points the jacket did the gig for me! I came across a bit more aggressive because I felt indestructible. In this jacket, I always see myself on a windswept hill, me and it against the elements. Leather

is power, you feel like James Dean - the wild one. Sometimes the confidence even made me go too far and I was turned into a machine of filth and invective!

If I was in a Glastonbury frame of mind, I would say that I was led to my jacket. Certainly my comedy started getting better and the other acts could see that something was going on. I've discovered that somebody in a not stylish body can create a look. I feel reconciled. I've worn it so much - it's totally trashed and every pocket is through. It is almost like Jason's fleece and now it has this talismanic quality. Now I know that a look can be empowering. I regard most comedians I see working as technically better than me but I get huge enjoyment out of stand-up and I will continue for as long as I can get away with it. I don't think I will take the jacket on tour with me. Robbie Coltrane has recommended a tailor.

Interview by Andrew G Marshall
Phill Jupitus' *Star Wars* inspired tour *Jedi Steady Go* starts on 5 March in Ipswich and ends on 1 May in Harrogate.

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What a work of art is man



'Raspberry Nervous Breakdown': too close to the sci-fi horror effects it invokes?

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

From a blood-filled head to a figure in a deep freeze, Marc Quinn has assembled quite a body of work – mostly his own. Tom Lubbock sees his new show

Sometimes I think to myself come on, just admit it, you are yourself, at heart, a Young British Artist – that's your sensibility, your fancy, you like to dwell on turds and foetuses and dismembered corpses and general pervy, you enjoy philosophical conceits and art in-jokes; and, if fate had dealt differently, if you were really true to yourself, that's the kind of art you'd make too. I confess, it is so. This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine: yes, just my thing. But...

But it's more complicated than that. Because the kind of art that you might, at a pinch, make yourself isn't necessarily the kind of art you love when you see it. It may well be exactly the kind of art you don't love at all. And this can spring not only from the humble thought, "I could do that, therefore it's no good," or the envious thought, "The bastard's got there first," or even the expansive thought, "I can get this at home, I want something more different from me."

For you can also recognise, quite honestly, that your own inner artist is not actually a very admirable one; that the creative imagination you've been lumbered with doesn't do you much credit. And so, when you find this imagination displayed in someone else's work... well, you always have a particularly sharp eye for your own foibles in other people. You know them better, you see them clearer, you come down harder. Indeed, remarking them so starkly in others can be the very thing that brings on the sorry self-awareness.

I start like this because, if there's one YBA I feel that *mutatis mutandis* I could very well be, it's Marc Quinn. He's best known for his *Self*, his own head cast in nine pints of his frozen blood; and with his work generally – human body-stuff that's queasy, cheeky, brainy in a rather abstract way, a bit old-fashioned even – I understand just where it's coming from. It's pretty near what my own inner artist's work would be like, and seeing it has helped me to know that. And if self-knowledge, however irksome, is a good in itself, then I should be grateful. Besides, any sense of affinity can't but generate some sympathy and fondness too. So it was with something like an eager personal interest that I went to Quinn's new show.

Dull and magniloquent, vivid but stupid, superb, superb, really got something, less so, quite amusing, boring, crap, crap, bafflingly pointless crap: that would be a short list of summary judgements on the dozen pieces here. Body-morphing is the main action. Moulds of a body (Quinn's own) in various media (rubber, lead, glass, ice) are involved in transformations and catastrophes, to create sculptures that are both startling physical specimens and metaphors for mind or identity in flux and peril. And with this mix of gross-out plus powerful-cum-corny existential themes, my sense of affinity is strong; though Quinn's cheekiness can become unsympathetically crude.

The two melty rubber pieces, for instance, are just too melodramatic, take them

emerging; smaller surrounding drops extrude into a hand or a penis; others are just plain, shiny little globules. The body separates and divides into liquid metal, perhaps about to re-form and rise again – unnerving, funny, pathetic, and a proper sculpture too.

Three pieces called *Study for Approaching Planck Density* are superb – small round mounds of folded metal that are in fact lead casts of Quinn's skin, compacted like suddenly dropped trousers, or as if implored and flattened under enormous pressure. You can make out a collapsed head or foot or hand in the general squash: a parcelled bog-man, the body reduced to a tablet of itself, but with a nod too to Michelangelo's image of a flayed skin with his own face in *The Last Judgement*.

A question, though: why always his own body, when the work isn't in any real way about Quinn himself? My own inner artist would never encourage the use of my own body – I'd have done the morphing on a famous statue or something. Granted that sounds pretty crass, but the fact that Quinn is a bit of a fatso does give a nudge of comedy to the whole project – unlike that other self-caster, Antony Gormley, the general solemnity of whose oeuvre is certainly convenience by his being a fine figure of a man. As for the much-publicised *Across the Universe* – his whole body cast in ice, in a sealed chamber, mysteriously evaporating – it's only an enlargement and a dilution of one aspect of the frozen blood head.

So too the only non-body work, *Eternal Spring*, where vases of sun-flowers are preserved, life-in-death, in vitrines of frozen silicon. Once again, the blood head did this riff already, more richly, and the Van Gogh reference is doubly boring. Here I want to disassociate myself completely.

Still, overall, the identification survives and thrives: it's near enough my own imagination on show. And, I suppose, this is one of the ways creativity often operates, not taking you into another world, but bodying out things you might almost have thought of too, things you know inside out – letting you feel, with wishful regret or with thankful relief, there, but for the grace of art, go I.

To 8 March, South London Gallery, 65 Peckham Rd, London SE5 (0171-703 6120)



The fact that Quinn is a bit of a fatso gives a nudge of comedy to the whole project

In the tortured steps of Egon Schiele

Lea Anderson has created a dance from the works of the Austrian expressionist. Looks painful, says Louise Levene

Lea Anderson normally makes do with her own sketches when looking for inspiration for new dance pieces. Her workroom's shelves are lined with scrapbooks packed with images. "I've got books of fledgling ideas, more developed ideas and loads and loads of loads of Egon Schiele."

The published sketches of the Austrian expressionist have formed the basis for Anderson's latest work for her all-male group The Featherstonehaughs, celebrating their 10th anniversary this year. Essentially these are the lost dances of Egon Schiele. Anderson (who studied at St Martins School of Art before doing her dance training at the Laban Centre) sees the sketches as stills taken from a forgotten dance. "The paintings are incredibly anatomically correct and exciting. The muscles and the tension in the bodies is so tangible it lends itself naturally as source material for movement," Anderson has been hatching this posthumous collaboration for over five years but it is her habit to spend a long time incubating her dances. "I usually make my own pictures and drawings and collect things for up to two years before a show to create

a structure, to see how it will work spatially."

It has to be said that many choreographers would regard dancers' bodies in the studio as the ideal means for establishing whether something will "work spatially" but Anderson has a CV to prove the efficiency of her working method. In addition to her work with her two groups The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs she has also been prolific in opera and theatre, choreographing ENO's *Khosrovshchina* and Sam Mendes' *Cabaret*.

Did she find that using Schiele's way of seeing provided her with a fresh set of ideas? Could we look forward to the lost dances of Michelangelo or Rodin or Beryl Cook? "I don't think so. This has been a very particular thing. I wanted to throw myself out of familiar ways of working but not so much that I didn't know how to work. It's up to me to decide what to do with the sketches. But using them makes sure that I can't resort to tricks or make things work in a way I know they will. It's been a challenge to me but it hasn't taken things out of my hands."

The costumes are by Sandy

Powell (famous for her work on *Caravaggio*, *Edward II*, *Orlando* and *Wings of a Dove*). Given Schiele's notorious fondness for the naked body it is perhaps a surprise that Anderson didn't opt to dispense with the costume budget entirely but she has a bit of a problem with stage nudity. "I think it's very complex and it's very hard to deal with. We've decided not to use real nudity but expressionist nudity."

This turns out to be flesh-coloured suits painted with muscles, bruises, pubic hair et al to mimic the tortured bodies of Schiele's drawings. The six Featherstonehaughs have had to work hard to get inside Schiele's figures. "They were a bit baffled at first but they've been staring at it all day every day in reproduce the shapes and they've become incredibly sensitive to the work. You have to make a sequence that requires fluid movement through maybe 50 of the paintings. It's been a challenge but one that they've really risen to."

The Featherstonehaughs draw on the sketchbooks of Egon Schiele, 24-28 Feb, The Place, 0171-387 0031 and touring nationally.



Bringing art to life: The Featherstonehaughs as Schiele

Erich Lessing/AGK



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The Independent

fashion

Spring 98 special

Art and fashion are having a fling. Our 48-page fashion special gets you up to date with the latest from both worlds. Sarah Moon photographs this spring's newest looks in the spirit of the season's muse, Frida Kahlo. Go behind the scenes with Vivienne Westwood as she explains the inspiration behind her new advertising campaign. And see exclusive pictures by Richard Billingham, star of the Royal Academy's Sensation show.

fashion fashion

Free with The Independent Saturday 28 February

man

Why I have to hurt myself

What can be done to help people whose inner turmoil leads them to mutilate themselves? David Batty finds out

CUTTING yourself seems an unlikely way to prevent suicide, but Sharon LeFevre found this the only way to release the distress she had bottled up for so long. Years of physical, sexual and mental abuse had left her unable to express her feelings. At her lowest point, she thought that death would be the only release from this constant anxiety. She made several abortive attempts to hurt herself, on one occasion trying to slit her wrists with blunt scissors. Six years ago she finally succeeded, smashing a mug against her bedroom wall and cutting open her left palm with the broken pieces. But to her surprise, and despite her pain, she felt relief.

"I felt a connection with a part of myself that I'd shut away for so long," recalls Ms LeFevre, 43, from Dolgellau in North Wales. "At last I seemed to have reached the traumas I'd buried so deeply, which gave me a strange sense of achievement."

Over the next few months, Ms LeFevre learned how to cut herself more safely. "I soon realised you could guide a razor blade better than broken crockery - the cut was cleaner and healed better," she explains. "I also tried to make sure I had bandages or a towel handy to mop up the blood, and would shut myself in the bathroom where I wouldn't be disturbed. Getting into a routine helped me to control the need to harm myself, and my injuries became less serious."

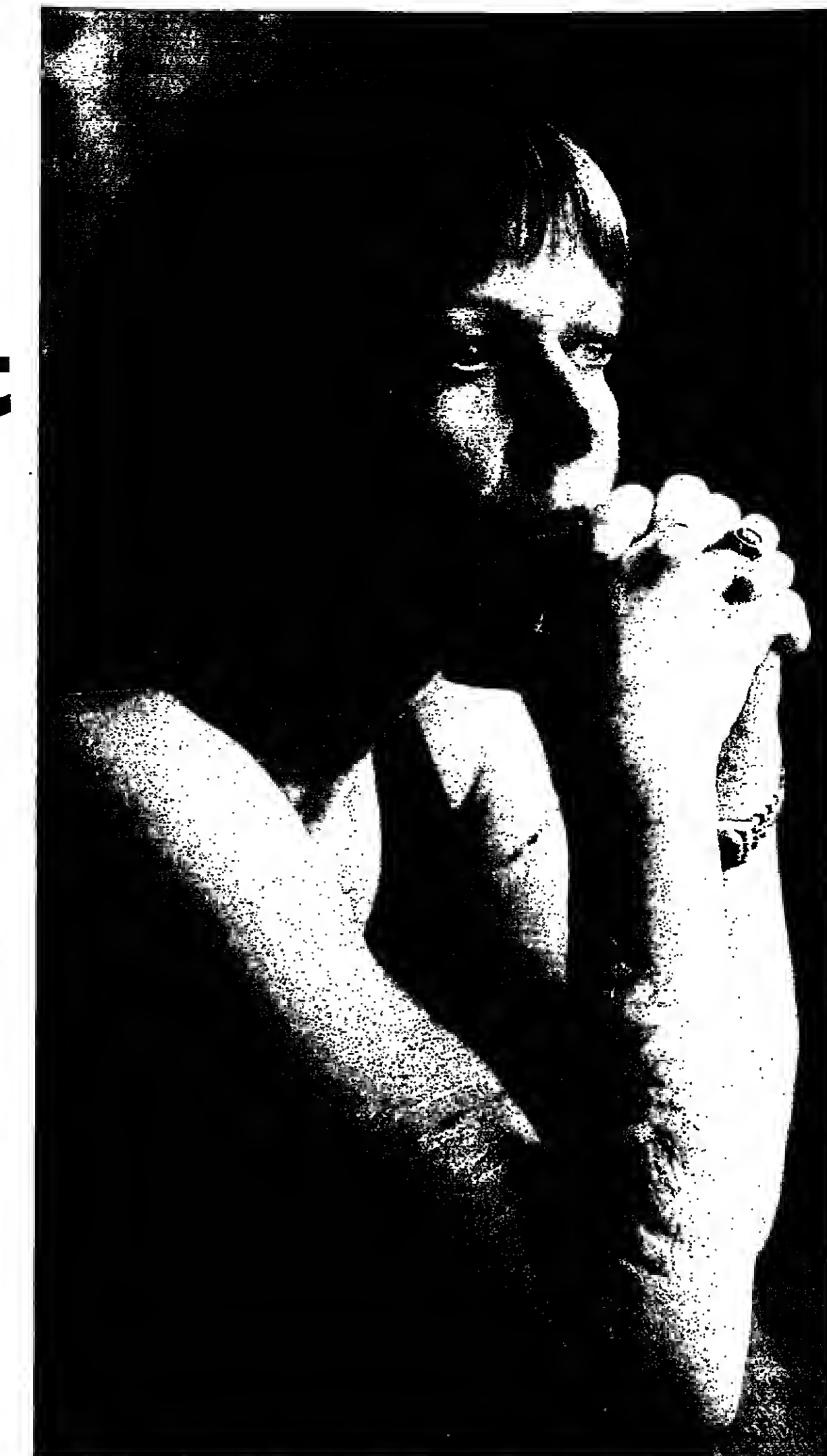
Despite her care, Ms LeFevre eventually needed medical help after misjudging a cut. "I was bleeding heavily, so a friend took me to the local Accident and Emergency department," she recalls. "But the doctors and nurses were immediately hostile, telling me I

was just an attention seeker and wasting their time. In fact, I tried to only cut myself when I was alone and always hid my scars. But no one asked me what was wrong, or showed any concern. They only seemed interested in punishing me. On another admission, I was even stitched up without anaesthetic. It was so painful, I didn't realise what was happening at first. I was crying and screaming but the staff completely ignored me."

Yet Ms LeFevre continued to harm herself and was eventually transferred to a psychiatric unit. "I encountered the same negative attitudes," she says. "If I wanted to get counselling, I had to agree not to injure myself, and if I tried explain why I did, I was told to shut up. I didn't see how it could be separated from my sexual abuse, they were so bound together. But the staff seemed to hope by ignoring my self-harm that it would go away. Without any release, my anxiety was unbearable. So, I decided to act like a 'good patient' to get discharged and be able to cut myself again. Of course, that soon became a vicious circle."

Then in 1993, Ms LeFevre was referred to Dryll y Car, an eight-bed support unit in Gwynedd, which aims to empower clients to take control of their lives. Although encouraged to develop other means of expressing her pain, through art therapy and counselling, she was not criticised for cutting herself if she felt unable to cope otherwise.

"The staff recognised that self-harm was my survival strategy. They accepted it wasn't something I could just snap out of, so tried to help me minimise my injuries. The agreement was that I used clean razor



Sharon LeFevre: 'Without any release, my anxiety was unbearable'

Photograph: Rob Bodman

blades and had access to a first aid kit, which reduced the risk of my wounds becoming infected."

Having this responsibility for her actions enabled Ms LeFevre to manage her self-harm more effectively. "It was such a relief not to be judged," she says. "The abuse I had suffered had left me with little self-

worth, and the punitive treatment I received in hospital just confirmed my belief that I was a bad person and didn't deserve compassion. But the staff at Dryll y Car helped me see it more positively, accepting it as a coping strategy. I didn't feel such a failure and began to get back on with my life."

Ms LeFevre now runs work-

shops in A&E departments across Britain, with the hope of challenging the medical profession's attitude towards self-harm. She has also written a book, *Killing Me Softly*, based on her own experiences, which describes self-harm as an intermediate language for traumatised individuals.

While she admits she still has

not fully recovered from her traumas, she believes that learning to manage her self-harm has allowed her to get on with life. "It may not be a great way of surviving but it has kept me alive," she says. "I've been able to complete a drama degree and start a PhD at Aberystwyth University, so no one can say I'm a waste of space anymore."

Hip hop: it's not as groovy as it sounds



DR PHIL HAMMOND

Hip hop - your questions answered.

What is hip hop?

Hip hop is a severe pain in an artificial hip that forces you to hop on your good leg to avoid it. Alas, many British patients suffer in silence because they think if their hip fails early, it must be their fault. On average, 10 per cent fail to make it to 10 years but some pack up much sooner, requiring a bigger and more painful revision operation.

And whose fault is that?

It's either a problem with the hip itself or the person putting it in.

Let's take hips first. This Capital prosthesis that's just flunked. *The Independent* said "it was never tested".

Have I got bad news for you. There are more than 60 different types of hip prosthesis used in the UK - only a handful have good published results

work well and which don't. And at the Nuffield Centre in Oxford, they've used an X-ray technique called RSA which detects minute movements of marker beads inserted at the time of the operation. This can predict which new prostheses are likely to fail far more quickly than conventional X-rays.

Hang on. If the older prosthesis have good results and never been bettered, why bother with expensive new ones?

What a naïve little world you inhabit. As one consultant put it, "Drug companies are not much different from arms manufacturers. They fly us all out to Florida, pamper us, brainwash us and then get us to use their latest fancy prosthesis. Whether we like it or not, we're all in their pocket."

Shouldn't Mr Dobson just tell everyone to go back to Stanmore or Charnley?

If only it were that simple. Some orthopaedic surgeons like trying out every new gadget on the market but others are creatures of habit and prefer to stick to what they know.

So, if they got hooked on a dodgy prosthesis from an early age, it's very hard to wean them off even in the face of the evidence. One consultant explained: "I personally would never use the Ring Hip but I know senior surgeons who still do. It's all they know."

What about junior surgeons? A study published in the *Journal of Bone Medicine* in 1996 found that Charnley and Stanmore replacements car-

'Drug companies are not much different from arms manufacturers. They fly us to Florida, pamper us and brainwash us'

over five years and only two have good long term (over 10 years) results - the Charnley and Stanmore implants.

So there are more than 50 others floating around in people's bodies that could all go the same way as the Capital?

I think you're being unduly alarmist. Hip replacements are one of the big success stories of modern medicine and 90 per cent of them in the UK seem to go extremely well.

Why seem?

Well, we don't have an obligatory national register of orthopaedic implants like they do in Sweden, and without it most orthopaedic surgeons haven't got much of an idea how their implants do or which ones are likely to fail prematurely.

But surely, if you're hammering great lumps of untested metal into the top of someone's thigh bone, the least you could do is follow it up?

You obviously haven't met many orthopaedic surgeons. Most are far too busy doing the operations to take time out to trace the long-term consequences. However, some enthusiasts do it meticulously. John Charnley created a prosthesis in the Sixties, provided the tools to put it in, trained other surgeons and followed up every single operation.

So we know it works?

Absolutely. Also, in East Surrey, they keep a regional X-Ray register of all hip operations to spot which prostheses

ried out by junior trainees were 11 times more likely to need a revision compared to consultant operations. Anecdotally, a consultant told me that when he started operating he was left to do hips on his own and his registrar had to do a ward round in the evening to pop all the hips back in that had fallen out.

So what can I do to improve my chances?

In the NHS, nearly half of operations are done by juniors. If yours is, ask for it to be closely supervised by a consultant. Make sure the consultant does lots of these operations and ask to see an audit of the results. He'll probably go purple but it's worth a try.

Failing that, ask the health authority to provide the information. Your hip is your future, after all.

What about the prosthesis?

You can't go wrong with Charnley or Stanmore, although they're hard to find because they've all been modified. Some modifications are good (e.g. the Elite) others are bad (e.g. the Capital). In the Exeter region, the Exeter hip has good results. Also, they wouldn't stick any old rubbish in the Queen Mum. She had the Furlong.

How do you know all this?

Because we covered it in the last series of *Trust Me, I'm a Doctor*. The new series kicks off with all you need to know about cancer vaccines, cranberry juice and obesity on 3 March, BBC2, 8pm.

HOW SELF HARM CAN BE A SURVIVAL STRATEGY - AND WHERE TO GET HELP

Since Princess Diana admitted she tried to cut her wrists, others have been encouraged to talk about their own experiences.

For some teenagers, self-harm is taking the place of eating disorders. Up to one in 50 adolescents hurt themselves badly enough to warrant medical treatment or counselling.

"Self-harm is used as a survival strategy," says Mike Greenwood, acting nurse manager at Dryll y Car. "People only harm themselves when extremely distressed and are much calmer afterwards. It's a way for them to express unspeakable emotions, often related to traumas like sexual abuse or voice hearing. So, forcing

clients to give up self-harm removes the only control they feel to have over their lives. With no outlet for their anxiety, they feel helpless and may harm themselves more seriously. But if you give them responsibility for their actions, they can become less reliant on professional support. Most of our clients have reduced the level of their self-harm and

a few have stopped it altogether."

Mr Greenwood admits that harm minimisation is a radical approach, but contends it is the only realistic one. "You cannot stop people from harming themselves but you can take measures to prevent them from accidentally severing an artery or tendon," he says. He runs training

sessions on self-harm for health professionals and has helped produce a new workbook *Working with Self-Harm*, due out in March. The work is part of the National Self-Harm Network's campaign for better understanding of self-inflicted injury. The organisation recently launched an incident report to assess how self-

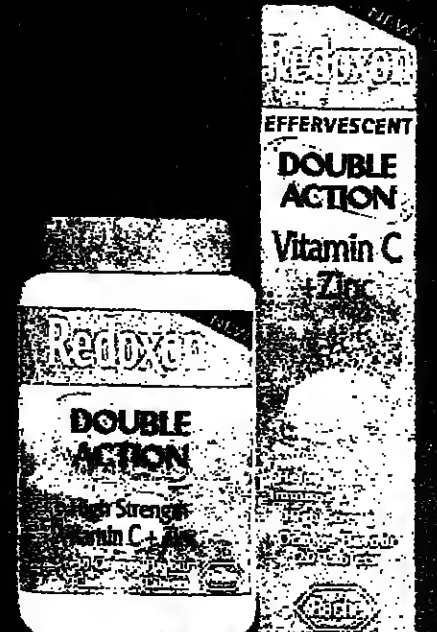
harmers are treated in A&E departments

● The National Self-Harm Network can be contacted via *Survivors Speak Out*, 34 Osney Street, London, NW1 3ND. For Working with Self-Harm, contact: Community Integrated Care on 051 420 3637. For information on workshops, contact Sharon LeFevre on 07341 423263

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VITAMIN C+ZINC MAY BENEFIT SOME YOUNG WOMEN.



THE INDEPENDENT

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Taming Iraq takes more than might

KOFI ANNAN's accord with Saddam Hussein has a "peace in our time" feel to it. The respite is deeply welcome but none of the root causes of military stand-off in the Gulf have changed, let alone diminished. The UN Secretary-General is not Neville Chamberlain and the Iraqi dictator is not, however coloured the language used about him, Adolf Hitler. It is hard, however, to escape the sense that his brave mission has postponed rather than avoided armed conflict.

But none of that is a good reason why the Americans, let alone the British Government should not accept – as quickly as protocol allows – that the UN Secretary-General has carried out his mission to Baghdad admirably. If Saddam has now accepted terms for the inspection process that bring him back into compliance, if he allows expert UN inspectors full and unfettered access, that must end the threat of bombing. And if, for face saving, adjustments are made to the nationalities comprising the inspection teams and if they are accompanied by diplomats, does that in any way reduce their potential effectiveness? The answer is no. The American government cannot now change the rules of the game, at least not without losing what remains of the fig-leaf cover for American strategic interests in the Gulf offered by United Nations camouflage.

As for Britain, now is a moment for the our government to show that it is capable of independent analysis and appraisal. Kofi Annan has demonstrated that diplomacy works, albeit temporarily, albeit only because aircraft carriers and cruise missiles were concentrating minds all round. Saddam is not mad; on the evidence of the past few weeks he is on the contrary a wily calculator of the negotiating odds well capable of rational judgements about his own best interests. The lesson must surely be that more diplomacy is wanted, not less. Robin Cook should now gird himself for a bout of action involving the Russians, the French and, above all, Saddam's neighbours in the Middle East – including of course the Israelis. If the British, at this juncture, were to demonstrate an ounce of originality in their analysis, a spark of realisation that Britain has interests separate from and possibly (in the short run) antagonistic to those of the US, then the capacity of British ministers and officials to exert influence would be maximised. Tony Blair's government seems to have been sucked into its present position if not quite in a fit of absence of mind then on the basis of knee-jerk support for what the current American government says are American interests. Mr Blair's loyalty to his pal is admirable but he might usefully pause to wonder whether Mr Clinton's judgement is always infallible.

For their part, the Americans, if they are wise, ought to welcome an opportunity to take a pace back and reflect. The agglomeration of armed might in the Gulf has been impressive and the world will doubtless have occasions in future to value the speed and effectiveness of America's planes and ships. Yet what has become apparent during the past few weeks are the limits of military strength. That the US could project force – launch any number of damaging air strikes – against Iraq is demonstrable. It still could. But in the absence of the diplomatic support across the region, let alone in the Security Council, the costs of unilateral action have grown; we did not need Tariq Aziz, Saddam's mouthpiece and deputy prime minister, to single out Britain to realise that this country shares not just America's strength but also its weakness.

What now? Unless the British government is going to commit itself to a permanent high-alert garrison in the Gulf, some situation of "normality" needs to be defined that would allow a military stand-down. "Normality" must also imply trade, or at least some increase in the wherewithal allowed the Iraqi regime to buy imports by selling oil. But is there a normality for Saddam short of his being allowed to re-arm and return to a state in which lightning attacks on neighbours becomes possible? The Iraqi problem is, whatever else, a regional question: his best protectors, the bars in the cage that will be needed to confine him, are his neighbours, in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Russia. But there can be no movement on the regional front without confronting the principal regional problem (in Arab eyes) which is Israel or, to be more precise, the failure to grasp the opportunity offered by the Oslo accords to move the main Palestinian movement (the PLO) forward into responsibility and power.

Charity begins at the blockbuster

AUDIENCES for *Titanic* are being approached in cinema foyers by tin-shakers for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. If only the liner had sunk nearer the coast – this seems to be message – doughty lifeboatmen would have rescued Leonardo DiCaprio as well as Kate Winslet. The charity is hoping for generosity by association.

Perhaps there is a trend in the making here. Other charities are sure to want to cash in. The drugs rehabilitation organisations did, it's true, miss a trick with *Trainspotting* but there are plenty of films currently on show which ought to get the givers going. The Royal Mail benevolent society surely ought to be shaking outside *The Postman*; while the RSPCA would make a fortune outside cinemas showing *Paws*, though perhaps not *The Lost World* or *Starship Troopers*, where the beasts have a hard time. Whether by contrast the NSPCC would benefit from *Home Alone 3* or *The Butchers Boy* remains to be seen.

Still, charities supporting maxillo-facial reconstruction ought to do good business with *The Bazer*. Societies for the support of retired gentlewomen would surely be generously treated by patrons of *Mrs Brown* while Nacro, the association for the care of offenders, is bound to do well outside theatres showing *Prisoner of the Mountains*. The Council for the Protection of Rural England should hurry along to showings of *The Woodlanders*. As for Relate, the marriage guidance organisation, it can take its pick – from *The Ice Storm* to *The Full Monty*.



MILES KINGSTON

A FRIEND of mine was going to New York, to the sale of the effects of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, so I slipped her a few quid to see if she could pick up a bargain for me. And she did! It was the catalogue of the sale. I have been leafing through it, and I have to say it was money well spent, as some of the lots are most intriguing, not to say exotic.

I hate not to share these things with you, so today instead of the planned leisure feature (an article called "Decorate your lounge the Lord Irvine of Lairg way"), I am simply reprinting some of the more interesting items in the auction, which seem unaccountably not to have been mentioned elsewhere:

Lot 63. First Edition of *Mein Kampf* in German by Adolf Hitler, inscribed "From the author to his old friend, Eddie." Lot 89. Welsh miner's hat, inscribed "Property of Prince of Wales: industrial visits only".

There is a piece of paper tucked inside the helmet, on which is written: "Ideas for conversation with miners: 1) football 2) horse racing 3) So, what's this General Strike all about then?" Lot 182. Second Edition of *Mein Kampf* in German by Adolf Hitler, inscribed "From the author. The book is going well! Did you get your first copy? Drop me a line..." Lot 245. Welsh/English dictionary, noused. Lot 263. The actual passport as used by the Prince of Wales, giving his occupation as "Traveller, Broadcaster, Statesman, Sportsman, Honorary Miner, you name it..." Lot 277. Third Edition of *Mein Kampf* in German by Adolf Hitler, inscribed by the author: "From the next ruler of Germany to the next ruler of England – *Vienen Grüss!*" Lot 377. Note from the Prince of Wales to unidentified correspondent: "Do you think the British would wear the idea of having a king whose wife was American? And who had been

previously married? I would like to know what the country thinks about this. Perhaps you could organise a few focus groups and test public opinion. Thanks!" Lot 657. Fifty-ninth Edition of *Mein Kampf*, in Czech, by Adolf Hitler. Inscribed by the author: "Did you get the previous fifty-eight copies I sent you? This is the first Czech edition! I am also having it translated into French, Polish, Norwegian and Russian! Don't ask why! PS What do you think of the idea of having *Mein Kampf* translated into Welsh? The Welsh are your people, of course, so I imagine they will rise to support you when I arrive!" Lot 996. Coronation robes of Edward VIII, marked: "Property of House of Windsor, please do not remove. HAVE DRY CLEANED ONLY." Lot 1,021. Sixty-third edition of *Mein Kampf*, in Belgian-French translation, inscribed by author, "Sorry couldn't make wedding, but here is wedding present for you and lovely Val-

lis!" Lot 1,065. The actual half-crown piece used by Edward VIII to decide whether to abdicate or not. Lot 1,066. A note from Edward VIII's secretary to his own wife, as follows: "Tonight I was present when His Maj decided that as he couldn't make up his mind whether to abdicate or not, he should toss for it. I argued that this was not the best way to decide future of Britain. He said he didn't care, he was tired of being told what to do by Baldwin, and by Wallis, and by Hitler... By Hitler?" I said: "Did I say Hitler?" he said: "Sorry. Slip of the tongue." I waited for him to toss. He didn't have a coin. Had to borrow half crown from me. He is hopeless, as usual. I waited for him to toss. Turned out he didn't know how to toss a coin. Always had it done for him. He asked me to do it for him. I said that on such important occasions it was vital he tossed it himself and absurd to expect me to do it. He whimpered

a hit and said nobody had ever talked to him like that before. "Except Wallis," he added. "And Baldwin." "And Hitler?" I said. "Yes," he said, blushing slightly. He then attempted to toss the coin. It rolled away and we spent half an hour looking for it. He wanted to borrow another coin and toss again, but I said only the first toss would count, so we would have to find the first coin and see if it was heads or tails... Lot 1,233. Note from Duke of Windsor to unidentified aide: "I have been offered Governorship of Canada. Do you advise me to accept?" Lot 1,234. Note from unidentified aide to Foreign Office: "Are you crazy, offering Canada to Duke of Windsor? He could no more run Canada than he could run his marriage!" Lot 1,235. Note from FO to aide: "Calm down. He may think he is going to Canada, but in fact we are sending him to Bahamas. He will never know the difference."

PICTURE OF THE DAY



The conquering car: The waterways of Venice surrender to the motoring age as an amphibious car passes St Mark's Square

Photograph: Brian Harris

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk; E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

What if the UN says no?

IF THE United States rejects the deal brokered by Kofi Annan and takes unilateral military action against Iraq, will they be "defying the will of the international community" (and thus be liable for either sanctions or a military strike on themselves led by a coalition of the other UN members)?

PAUL O'HANLON
Runcorn, Cheshire

IN RECENT days, British and US officials have spoken as if the UN Secretary-General's job in Baghdad was to deliver instructions on their behalf. They should remind themselves of Article 100 of the UN Charter, paragraph 2 of which states: "Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their duties."

MARTIN AITKEN
London N7

DR O'PREY says that the 1939-45 war "taught us that it is short-sighted and dangerous to humiliate and ruin a proud nation" (letter, 21 February), but our leaders have still not learnt that it was folly in 1919 to humiliate and ruin the Arabs.

They were divided between a multitude of governments, set up without consultation; one of their most sacred territories was designated for Western colonisation; and their oil wealth was placed in the hands of a tiny minority and used largely to enrich the West.

Britain has a major share of the blame for the subsequent growth of extremist movements. If we join the USA in bombing Iraq, we shall only reopen and deepen the wound.

P J STEWART
Oxford

DAVID AARONOVITCH (Comment, 21 February) is right in pointing out that the last Gulf war was a slaughter.

It is important to remember that only something like 7 per cent of the tonnage dropped on Iraq and Kuwait was "smart". The rest was unguided.

ed, and targets were missed 70 per cent of the time. With 80,000 tons dropped, civilian casualties were extremely high.

A second military adventure against Iraq would certainly kill and maim many innocent civilians. It would do nothing to bring democracy or justice to the region.

DR BULENT GOKAY
Lecturer in International Relations
Keele University, Staffordshire

IT SEEMS that if Kofi Annan's mission fails, war will be imminent. What safety precautions do we take to protect us against chemical warfare?

HAREEN MARCELLINE
Dyce, Grampian

Whitehall mothers

THE IMPLICATION that civil servants generally are benefiting from the 10 nursery places provided by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions ("Worried about childcare costs? You're not a civil servant, then", 20 February) is ridiculous. The highest childcare provider, the Ministry of Defence, only has 500 places. What of the rest?

Minimal, if any, provision. I have worked in the Civil Service since 1974 and have children now aged 20 and 10. Apart from two short breaks for maternity leave, I have continued to work since joining. I have never had regular childcare provision made available to me by my employer and have never been aware of any available at Civil Service sites in the areas I have lived or worked.

Despite campaigns by Civil Service unions, successive governments have not come up with anything meaningful for the vast majority of their employees with children.

APRIL VESEY
Rushlip, Middlesex

MY husband's salary supports himself, myself and our two small chil-

dren. Just why should it support, through the tax breaks you propose, other people's working wives and their children's nannies as well?

SALLY DEALLER
London SE15

Nuclear waste storage

YOUR article on the storage of radioactive waste at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston ("Nuclear dumps to run out of space by 2002, says report", 2 February) gives rise to unnecessary public concern.

It highlights a report by William Peden of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and suggests a picture of decay and potential danger because of the absence of a national nuclear waste disposal strategy following the scrapping of plans for the Nirex deep waste repository at Sellafield in Cumbria.

In fact, AWE Aldermaston does not have a space crisis for the storage of radioactive waste materials. Our plans for the treatment, storage and disposal of radioactive waste have never depended on the Nirex facility being available to us. We are well able to meet our future needs. AWE produces three types of radioactive waste: low-level solid waste such as corvalls and filters; intermediate-level solid waste such as contaminated materials from process areas; and liquid effluent from cleaning processes. We do not produce any high-level waste such as that from the nuclear power industry.

The majority of our low-level waste will continue to be sent to the national disposal site at Drigg in Cumbria, which has ample capacity for this type of disposal well into the next century. The remainder and our intermediate level waste will continue to be placed in specially designed and approved containers and stored on-site in purpose-designed facilities.

Plans for a further waste store, which will be available by 2000, are well advanced.

R A BRADLEY
Chief Executive
AWE Hunting-Drive
Aldermaston, Berkshire

A Mason – I admit it

I AM not afraid or ashamed to declare that I am a Freemason and have been for close on forty years ("Masons escape forced exposure", 18 February).

In all that time, I have never known or heard of a Mason who derived unfair advantage from being a Mason. I have known Masons who contribute to various charities (and not only to help other Masons, as is often mistakenly stated). To be accepted as a Mason, it is a *sine qua non* to have a belief in a superior being. It is fairly widely known that the Duke of Kent is the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England. Do those who imply that dubious conduct exists between Masons also imply that His Royal Highness would be the head of such an organisation?

Without Freemasonry, society would be the poorer.

E MILLER
Thames, Kent

Irvine's wallpaper

SURELY it is time to stop carping about the money the Lord Chancellor has spent refurbishing his apartments ("Irvine and the art of home decorating", 20 February). The architecture is distinguished and deserves appropriate decoration, paintings and furniture. It should not be forgotten that they belong to the nation and not to him. I for one am looking forward to visiting them on one of the open days which will surely be arranged this year.

JOHN MITCHELL
London SE13

Back to the Old Deal

THERE appears to be a large hole in the Government's policy towards young people, through which the nation's wealth and talent are rapidly disappearing.

Tens of thousands of pounds of tax-payers' money are spent on each child's education until they are 16. When young people reach 18 they have the "New Deal", a scheme whereby tax-payers' money is used to "buy" temporary jobs for long-term unemployed youngsters.

These long-term unemployed are the ones who left school two years earlier to discover there was virtually nothing available to them in the way of jobs and training. Having been forced to squander the most valuable and influential two years of their working lives, they are then forced into a stop-gap, dead-end job.

It is unfortunate for the Government that the only tool it has available to tackle youth training problems is taxpayers' money. As an alternative it could consider transferring the whole of the youth training programme to the private sector and using the old apprenticeship format, a scheme of the highest order that catered for all school-leavers. That would be a New Deal, and a much better deal.

R HUMPHREY
Maidenhead, Berkshire

Foreign policy games

IS IT not time to close down foreign ministries?

Their primary functions seem to be to play elaborate games which may end in war, to turn sensible ideas about new forms of European cohabitation into a folly of technocratic infighting, and to conduct so-called "relations" with their opposite numbers in other countries, relations which warm and cool like adolescent friendships.

There is no longer any need for "foreign policy". There are transnational economic systems and transnational social problems which need to be dealt with as rationally and fairly as we try to deal with national economies and problems.

Dr PHILIP ALLOTT
Trinity College, Cambridge

Notes to Eddie, and other fascinating pieces recovered from the House of Windsor

How the Iraqi mouse made the West's elephant dance



PATRICK
COCKBURN

President Clinton had a bad crisis, Saddam Hussein a good one. The US still needs a credible Middle East policy

THE United States and Britain have achieved their narrow aim of obtaining unfettered access for UN weapons inspectors with no time limit on their activities imposed by Baghdad. By every other measure Saddam Hussein has succeeded through skilful management of the present crisis in escaping the political and economic isolation that defeat in the Gulf war placed Iraq seven years ago. "Saddam has certainly out-thought the Clinton administration," says Laith Kubba, an Iraqi opposition intellectual. "The US has behaved like an elephant with no brain, so even a mouse like Saddam can make it dance to his tune."

The very presence of Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, in Baghdad this weekend marks the return of Iraq as a player in the Middle East. It showed that President Saddam is still in business and likely to remain so. It also underlines his success in using the dependence of the UN weapons inspection team (Unscim) on his co-operation to work in Iraq, a dependence which enables him to switch crises on and off at his own convenience.

Yesterday the Iraqi leader chose to switch off the crisis, probably well pleased with the gains he has made. This is masked by international focus on his biological and chemical weapons as a measure of his power. In fact Unscim is only one of three methods employed by the US to contain Iraq since 1991 and probably the least effective. The other two are economic sanctions and the military alliance of the US, Britain and the south Gulf states created to fight the Gulf war. Both have been significantly weakened by the present crisis.

Economic sanctions have been partially lifted by the decision of the UN Security Council to increase the value of oil Iraq is allowed to export every six months from \$2.1bn (£1.3bn) to \$5.2bn. The Iraqi response is to object to the whole arrangement, saying that it cannot export more than \$4bn without repairing oil equipment damaged in the first Gulf war. But the Security Council can hardly will the end without willing the means. Presumably spare parts will be allowed through. In effect Iraq will be able to export about two million barrels a day of crude oil, which is two-thirds of its export level before sanctions were imposed in August 1990.

The most important method of containing Iraq is the military alliance against it. The core of this is the US, Britain and the south Gulf states, notably Saudi Arabia. The alliance

now looks much more ragged than could have been expected even six months ago. The Gulf states, and above all Saudi Arabia, have shown an extreme lack of enthusiasm in lining up with the US and Britain. Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia is said to have told Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, that his country is finding its guard dogs (presumably the US and Britain) more expensive to feed than the wolf (Iraq) whom they were supposed to guard it against.

If Arab rulers had any doubts about the sympathies of their subjects, then these were probably put to rest by the riots in M'An in Jordan over the weekend. Suddenly, television screens across the Arab world were showing rioters showering police with stones and wounding four of them with machine gun fire after a pro-Iraqi demonstrator was killed.

For President Clinton it has not been a good crisis. He has paid for his neglect of the Middle East since he took office in 1993. He inherited the legacy of President Bush's victory in the Gulf War which established American predominance in the Middle East. In 1993 the Oslo accords seemed to make it possible that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be defused by the Palestinians winning the right to establish a national state in Gaza and on the West Bank.

It never happened. President Clinton's pro-Israeli bias helped undermine Oslo. At the same time, two other legs of his Middle East policy were in trouble. These were the "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran. Both countries were to be isolated politically, militarily and economically. Against Iraq failure was partial, but against Iran it was almost total. One result of the outcome of the latest crisis with Iraq may be that the US will cultivate Iran, which is a traditional enemy of Saddam Hussein.

Washington does not seem to perceive that its whole Middle East policy is in trouble. Last week Mrs Albright, who talks tough but has proved ineffective during the present crisis, said there was no connection between the confrontation between the US and Saddam Hussein and the Arab-Israeli conflict. What this means is that there is no connection in terms of State Department policy, but in reality the US failure to broker an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians has contributed significantly to its inability to rally support in the Arab world against Iraq.

In retrospect the US might have been wiser to rely more on the traditional methods of economic embargo rather than weapons inspections to contain Iraq. After all President Saddam had far more chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them in 1991 but the threat of retaliation deterred him from using them. The inhibition should apply more forcibly today.

President Clinton and Tony Blair can fairly say that they have saved Unscim and allowed it to operate freely for as long as it wants. They will add that Iraq blinked at the last moment in the face of bombing. In reality, the White House was always more nervous that it appeared at committing itself to an air offensive without a clear political or military objective. Otherwise, it would scarcely have mandated Mr Annan to go to Baghdad. The weapons inspections will go ahead, but the real significance of the outcome of the crisis is that Saddam Hussein is well and truly out of the box where Washington kept him after his defeat in Kuwait.

Why country folk want to hang a 'do not disturb' sign on their gates

The country comes to the city next week, to protest in London about not being 'understood'. Andreas Whittam Smith understands only too well



The hedgerows of old England: under threat from today's country dwellers

Photograph: Tom Pilton

IT IS always important when people take to the streets. Let there be no doubt that the huge rally of rural folk due to take place in London next Sunday is a significant event. In my lifetime, coal-mining communities and anti-nuclear arms protesters have staged marches on a scale that has compelled attention. We should take the countryside protest with equal seriousness, even though we are promised that it will be peaceful, picking up its litter as it goes, and that it will dispense with the inflammatory speeches normal on such occasions. Probably the 2,000 beacons which are to be lit across the countryside at dusk on Thursday will be just as eloquent as a tirade by Arthur Scargill or Michael Foot.

Yet the march is puzzling. What could possibly bring country people in such number – over 100,000 are expected – to the heart of the capital? They hate London. They despise people who live in towns. For decades the shires have been peaceful. Rural depression once caused Norfolk to elect Labour members of Parliament. But that is all. Indeed for over 50 years now, we have heaped such riches onto the farming community in terms of subsidies, fixed prices, compensation against any untoward development, special tax breaks, that it is very surprising that the countryside should dare to protest. If banners are to be carried on Sunday, I think it would be appropriate if they simply displayed the words "Thank you" to acknowledge how well the 80 per cent of the population that is urban has looked after its country cousins. If we stopped sheltering agriculture from market forces, we would have much cheaper food and lower taxes. That is the sacrifice that the towns make to the country. Many industries and millions of urban workers have faced and do face much greater difficulties. There have been no guarantees for factory work as there have been for farming.

This is why I doubt whether the primary motivation of the marchers on Sunday will be economic, even though rural incomes evidently are under threat. For example, the Government is conspicuously refusing to apply to Brussels for the compensation that British farmers could expect to receive on account of the appreciation of the pound. The Secretary of State for Agriculture, Jack Cunningham, has signalled that the days of unlimited subsidies are drawing to a close. Among agricultural ministers, he is not alone in this. The nations of Europe wish to spend less on farming in order to keep their budget deficits under better control; at the same time international trading rules are beginning to outlaw many forms of agricultural support. The forces bearing down on farm

incomes are powerful and pervasive and international in character. No amount of marching would make an iota of difference. In its heart, the farming community must know this.

Is the clue to why country folk are marching to be found in their most often repeated complaint, albeit the most vague – we are not understood? Here are some of the comments that rural protesters have been making: "a largely urban Parliament does not really

in order to pre-empt the new regulations. About one third of the hedges of England and Wales are thought to have been lost between 1984 and 1993. The Council for the Protection of Rural England estimates that more than 2,000 miles have been ripped up in the past nine months – an increase of more than 30 per cent on the same period a year earlier. In light of this, one could say that the countryside is too precious to be left in the charge of country people.

although its effects are felt by all hearty eaters, whether town or country. Likewise the threat – from Brussels – to the production of unpasteurised milk and cheese is lumped in.

The principles underlying the four examples are different. In the case of hunting the issue is the right of minorities to pursue their ancient customs unless – as with cock-fighting or bear baiting – they are exceptionally repugnant. It is the principle of tolerance. The United Kingdom has stricter laws preventing cruelty to animals than most nations, yet fox hunting has always been allowed to continue. The right to roam, virtuous though it may seem, is an attack on the rights of property owners. Whatever the disgraceful circumstances in which the old landed estates were put together, or whatever the hard-faced arrogance of owners who erect "no trespassing" signs on the gates opening out to vast stretches of wilderness, the right to privacy on one's own property is a powerful and long-established rule. In the same way, Mr Cunningham's ban on beef-on-the-bone is an interference with our liberty to lead our own lives.

The marchers on Sunday, therefore, do have something to say, which despite all my irritations at country people appeals deeply to me. They are protesting at what they perceive as an attempt to reduce the boundaries in which we conduct our private activities. That is what will bring tens of thousands of people into the London streets on Sunday and that they are concerned exclusively with rural activities is besides the point. But I doubt whether the countryside will need to hold any further rallies. It looks as if the Government has taken the point. The marchers have already attained their objective.

The marchers on Sunday will be protesting at what they perceive as an attempt to reduce the boundaries in which we conduct our private lives

understand rural issues." "We are all in crisis through lack of political understanding and are desperate for recognition." "People in towns don't really seem to want to know or care."

My immediate response to this is to say that urban people understand only too well. Not only do we realise how heavily we subsidise the countryside, we also know that country dwellers are poor protectors of the environment. Some of the people marching in London on Sunday will have been busy destroying hedgerows in the past few months. No sooner did farmers realise that legislation will shortly come into force that will increase the protection of ancient hedgerows, essential shelter and habitat as they are for wild birds, animals, plants, insects and the like, than they engaged in a frenzy of hedge destruction

But there is something else that may not be understood sufficiently well. Another remark quoted recently put the point: "There's support for the rally ... because there's a general attack on our liberties. Everywhere our freedom of choice is disappearing." The liberties under threat are by now well known. They comprise the right to go hunting foxes with dogs, which is banned in the awkwardly named private member's measure currently in Parliament – the "Wild Mammals (Hunting with dogs) Bill". In the same list is the right for owners of mountain, moorland, heath, downland and common land – some 12 per cent of the entire land of England and Wales – to forbid walkers to roam freely across their estates. This will be the subject of a Government statement to-morrow. The beef-on-the-bone ban also figures,

When it comes to cricket, what's the use of a dead sparrow?



GLEND
COOPER

The MCC votes today on whether to accept women members, but do they want to join?

THERE are three things that everyone knows about cricket: England aren't very good, it's often rained off and Marylebone Cricket Club does not allow women members.

Today the MCC is voting whether to admit women into its august membership. Early indications seem to suggest that, despite the efforts of its go-ahead committee, the old farts will have the last say and women will be bowled out once more.

It's not surprising. A call once went out at Lord's: "Is there a doctor in the house?" A member had had been stung on the tongue by a bee, a potentially life-threatening situation. The doctor however saved the man with prompt action. "Is there anything I can do for you,

Doctor?" the grateful member gasped. "Actually I'd love a tour of the members' pavilion," she replied. The MCC refused. It might have set a precedent.

So even if by some Damascus conversion, the two thirds majority needed to make this momentous change agree to accept women, would women really want to join a place like that? Like Groucho Marx, if asked, I'd reply that I didn't care to belong to any club that had accepted me as a member.

Actually I think women are kept out of the MCC so that we don't realise how boring it is. This is a club, after all, where your average member is a 57-year-old man. You have to wait around 30 years to get in (which insures that the average age will

remain on the high side). And one of their most prized exhibits is a stuffed sparrow "bowed out by Jehangir Khan in '36, old boy". (Still, I suppose that's better than most of the England team could achieve now).

And on top of that you go there to watch one of the most bizarre games ever invented. History has it that the game was invented by shepherds (who had presumably found counting sheep too stimulating), although the real success arrived in the 18th century. Since then the game has become riddled with rules and code words and Ian Botham.

I suppose that the true reason that the English took to the game was because whenever the colonies looked like getting

good at it, they could suddenly say something like, "You haven't got a silly midoff so we'll have to start the Test again!" "Yes you may have more runs but we've got more wickets!" "The referee's decision is final and he went to Elton, so you're out."

Of course this doesn't happen any more. We may have won one Test Match the other day but England's dismal performance is as perennial as washed out bank holidays and Lord Irvine's obsession with interior decoration.

Except that's not quite the case. Women's cricket is doing well. We held the World Cup until December and are regarded as one of the top four countries. More and more

women are reading the monthly magazine published by *Wisden*, the cricketer's bible – in the last year alone numbers have almost doubled.

So maybe it's not the case that we should be fighting to get into the dreary old MCC. We should be starting up our own exclusive club instead, preferably right next door. We could have something in better taste than those garish red and yellow colours. We could be part of a club where people actually won things instead of having to whinge about the pitch the whole time. And then enjoy watching the men outside patetically begging to join. To be kind maybe we'll toss them out a couple of sparrows. Let's hear it for the WCC!

YOU may have read about this elsewhere, but only Pandora brings you the whole truth. When the *Telegraph's* fashion editor, Hilary Alexander, spotted Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott at Fashion Week, she was so impressed by his double-breasted, pin-striped sartorial elegance, that she very politely asked him the identity of his taint. Apparently still reeling from his recent splashing at the Brits, Prescott went into a fury. "I'm just here to pick up my wife, for Christ's sake, not for any other fucking reason," he raged. Then stormed off to wait for her in his car.

The TV docudrama about Princess Diana's romance with Dodi Fayed, currently being filmed in Mallorca, has been plagued by a familiar parasite. A swarm of international paparazzi have descended on the production of *The People's Princess*, stalking the leading actors from



Amy: prepared? Rex



Oh those wags on the *Agriculture Select Committee*. After hours of hearings on the question of food safety, some MPs could barely contain their giggles when one food bureaucrat announced that his company "produced from conception to consumption". This phrase has inspired committee members to author a new list of "witty" catchphrases, now being passed from hand to hand at Westminster. Examples we are able to print in this newspaper include: "from sperm

to spoon", "from orgasm to orifice" and "from penis to plate".

What is going on between Tina Brown and Alan Rusbridger, editor of the *Guardian*? Recently spotted lunching together at Le Caprice, another meeting was scheduled for this week during Rusbridger's visit to New York. In the past months, the *Guardian* has run several glowing tributes to the New York editor obsequiously headlined the "Queen of New York", followed by Sunday's *Observer* hagiography in which Tina has become "Queen of Magazines". Tina, whose magazine lost more than \$10m last year, cannot be thrilled by the New York's imminent loss of its corporate independence and the move out of its historic offices. The "Queen" will now be reporting to tough-guy Condé Nast president Steve Florio. Could she be considering a new throne as the aspiring "queen of British Sunday newspapers" at the *Observer*?

Do we really want to swap one of our great national assets, Lynne Franks, who is moving to Los Angeles, for Tina Brown? The absolutely fabulous PR star of the Eighties has progressed to offering "creative strategy" on behalf of a number of clients, including *The Big Issue* (launching in Santa Monica in April) and *Unesco* (something called "global fashion"). She told Pandora: "They like the idea over there of a loud, Jewish-English woman with lots of ideas and enthusiasm. It's a much more loving, open world."



Absolutely Lynne

Pandora

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Airbus to fight Boeing for £2bn BA fleet order

By Michael Harrison

British Airways has asked Boeing and Airbus Industrie to come up with radically different ways of financing a £2bn order for a fleet of up to 100 new aircraft for its regional European services.

The order, the biggest placed by BA for seven years, will be a contest between Boeing's "next generation" 737 and the Airbus A320 family of jets.

Bob Ayling, BA's chief executive, said he expected the two manufacturers to devise innovative ways of financing the new fleet to cut the costs of ownership for BA.

One option is for the manufacturers to finance the aircraft against their own balance sheets, allowing BA simply to rent the aircraft, paying a charge for every hour they are in the air. This would leave the manufacturer to take responsibility for everything from maintenance to residual values. "We are open to ideas," said Mr Ayling. "Airlines are very asset hungry businesses and anything we can do to lay off some of the exposure is good for our shareholders. All we want as an airline is the use of aircraft. Provided the supplier is secure, we are indifferent to ownership."

The BA fleet is dominated by Boeing aircraft and has never bought a single Airbus jet. The only Airbus aircraft it has in op-

eration are 10 A320s inherited through the takeover of British Caledonian. Boeing accounts for about 80 per cent of BA's fleet of 300 aircraft. About half the fleet is owned by BA and half financed through operating leases.

Furthermore, the last time the two manufacturers were vying for a big BA order for wide-bodied jets in 1991, Airbus controversially lost out. BA selected the GE-powered Boeing 777 for the £1bn order in preference to the Rolls-Royce powered Airbus A330.

However, Mr Ayling rebuffed suggestions that Airbus had simply been invited to take part this time in order to force down Boeing's final price. "I hope that Airbus sees it as an opportunity to sell some aircraft to an operator that has not bought from it before," he added. BA has asked for initial tenders by 16 March and is expected to make a final selection this summer. It has ruled out splitting the order between the two manufacturers as this would reduce the cost savings available by, for instance, only needing to train pilots for one type of flightdeck.

The new aircraft will start entering service in 1999 and will replace ageing Boeing 737s, Fokker 28s and Fokker 100s, MD83s and British Aerospace Advanced Turbo Prop aircraft which are being phased out because of more stringent noise regulations.

Initially, BA requires 30 new jets worth £400m-£600m to enter service on regional routes from Birmingham and Manchester. But further orders for another 70 aircraft to update fleets at its subsidiary airlines Deutsche BA, Air Liberté and EuroGatwick could follow.

News of the invitation to tender helped lift British Aerospace, which has a 20 per cent stake in the four nation Airbus consortium. Its shares rose 29p to 190.9p. BAE also announced that the 29.5 per cent limit on foreign shareholdings had been passed for the first time. The Government is preparing to lift the limit to 49.5 per cent for both BAE and Rolls-Royce. BAE has also announced plans for a three for one share split.

Boeing said it would "aggressively promote" its next generation 737 for the order adding that it offered significant commonality with the 737s already in BA's fleet. Since the launch of the programme in 1995, Boeing has received 811 orders from 38 airlines.

However, Airbus executives believe it is in with a good chance of scooping the order. When it lost out to Boeing in 1991, Lord King was still chairman of BA and the aircraft purchase was linked to a deal to sell its engine maintenance business in Cardiff to GE.

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William Purves (middle), chairman of HSBC Holdings plc, answering questions at a news conference yesterday. HSBC, which posted a 3 per cent rise in profit to HK\$9.18bn in 1997, did not escape recent Asian financial turmoil. Photograph: Reuters

HSBC profits hit as bank warns of fresh Asian fall-out

By Stephen Vines in Hong Kong and Lea Paterson in London

HSBC Holdings, owner of Midland Bank, yesterday took steps to prepare for the fall-out from the Asian crisis by increasing bad debt provisions by 60 per cent to £615m. The banking group warned there could be worse to come in the troubled region.

Sir William Purves, group chairman, said Asia had seen "a deterioration in credit quality, the full impact of which is only beginning to emerge". But, speaking to reporters in Hong Kong, Sir William insisted the bank's "long term view" of Asia was positive. "Our business in Asia is paramount", he added.

The Asian turmoil hit profits at the group's investment banking division, where profits dropped by 42 per cent to £132m, largely because of losses on debt securities and equities. But John Bond, group chief executive, was yesterday keen to stress HSBC's commitment to its investment banking activities.

Overall, the group saw profits rise to £4.97bn from £4.52bn in 1996.

The crisis also took its toll on the Hongkong Bank, the group's largest subsidiary, which delivered a profit rise of just 3 per cent, much lower than expected.

The strength of sterling also knocked down profits for the second year on the row. But HSBC yesterday took steps to avoid future sterling hits. From next year, the bank will report in US dollars. Sir William said: "The US dollar and currencies

linked to it form the main currency bloc in which the Group's business is transacted".

Unlike a number of his UK counterparts, Mr Bond yesterday signalled the bank was unlikely to participate in consolidation of the European banking sector, at least in the short term.

Speaking at a press conference in London, Mr Bond said: "We have nothing on our agenda for acquisitions at present". But he added: "If the right opportunity came along at the right price we would look at it". Meanwhile in Hong Kong, Sir William told reporters that, with bank assets at record low prices in some parts of Asia, HSBC was keeping its "eyes open to opportunities".

HSBC's bad debt provisions - which included a £175m special provision reflecting the "unusual level of uncertainty" in Asia - were welcomed by the City yesterday. "They have taken quite a large provision for bad debt, which has been taken very well," one dealer said. "The general pervasion was precaution", said John Leonard, banking analyst at Salomon Smith Barney.

Mr Bond said he hoped the special provision, the bulk of which will be absorbed by the Hongkong Bank group, would be sufficient to cover for the fall-out from Asia. Midland Bank had a strong year, with pre-tax profits up 28 per cent to £1.6bn. First Direct, the telephone banking division, also made money, although Mr Bond refused to provide details of profits.

LCR to get 90-day extension for Channel Tunnel link rescue plan

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

The decision to build the high-speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) is likely to be delayed by up to 90 days, according to senior Whitehall sources.

Ministers are expected to announce the delay soon after the deadline for the original London & Continental Railways (LCR) consortium to re-bid for the project expires this Friday.

The extension would allow other bidders - such as Railtrack - to come forward with new proposals, although it is understood that they may have to reform under the LCR name to avoid the Government having to re-tender the entire project. Going through the entire bidding process again would effectively scupper the rail link.

The future of the rail link was thrown into disarray earlier this month when LCR said it could not complete the pro-

ject without an extra £1.2bn in subsidies. The original LCR plans would have cut about 25 minutes off the 65-minute journey time into London for commuters from outer Kent.

Alastair Morton, the Government's advisor on the CTRL, is understood to be considering more than 30 different scenarios under which the high-speed line linking the Channel Tunnel and central London could be built.

One option would see the 12 mile tunnel from east London

scrapped and instead a new fast service using the North London line run from Stratford. This would require some overland work to be done to allow trains to run to St Pancras, the central London station, but the cutting out the tunnelling costs would save nearly £1bn.

Another - put forward by the contractors Bechtel and Ove Arup, currently members of the LCR consortium - would see the link built in two phases with the line to Waterloo complet-

ed first and then the link to St Pancras finished later.

The whole project could then be sold off to Railtrack. The owner of the link would then recoup its costs by charging large access fees to Eurostar.

Civil servants at the Treasury also believe that many individual bits of the project could be parcelled off to the private sector. They point out that the building giant Blue Circle is poised to build a £2bn office and residential complex at

Ebbsfleet, north Kent - with the proposed Eurostar terminal at its heart. This new station and some of the railway line required, say Treasury mandarins, could be sold off to Blue Circle - thus reducing the cost.

The flagship £580m Thameslink 2000 rail project, linking towns in the Home Counties north of London to the Sussex coast, is likely to suffer from CTRL's collapse.

Thameslink 2000, which will improve services for cross-Lon-

don commuters, was relying on the £5.4bn CTRL project to build a £150m station underneath King's Cross.

As a compromise the proposed station - which was to offer an interchange between the Underground, Eurostar and mainline services - is likely to be scaled down.

Sources close to the project said that the station could be built much more cheaply if it did not need to include facilities for Eurostar.

Roland Shaw plans comeback with stock market oil float

By Terry Macalister

Roland Shaw, one of the great swashbucklers of the early North Sea oil boom, is set to make a comeback to the stock market with a flotation of Burren Energy that could value the company at more than £80m.

Having kept a low-profile since being deposed from the chairmanship of Premier Oil in 1995, Mr Shaw now wants to raise cash for a series of projects in the Caspian Sea region. He has been chairman of Burren for less than a year.

A private placement is currently being organised by ING Barings and Finian O'Sullivan, Burren's chief executive, confirmed that it would be followed by a stock market launch. He said: "We are working at an Initial Public Offering for Burren before the end of this year. We have been doing detailed work with Barings on the value of the company."

Outsiders said Burren could

be worth more than £80m on the basis of very encouraging flow rates from wells that are already producing in the Nebit Dag region of Turkmenistan.

If the IPO takes off, it will offer a triumphant return for Mr Shaw with the Caspian area representing all the frontier characteristics of the UK North Sea in the early 1970s.

Mr Shaw, who still has a small personal holding in Premier, left the UK explorer after holding the chairmanship there for 24 years. He was removed from his post against his will.

Over that period Mr Shaw, now aged 76, raised the asset value of Premier from £175,000 to £130m through a combination of exploration success and takeover.

But it was not all good times. Analysts, never favourites with Mr Shaw, remember Premier's share price hitting 90p but also dipping to 17p. Yesterday it was stable at 44.5p.

A larger-than-life-American

who was a former diplomat and then bomber pilot, Mr Shaw became known in Britain 50 years ago but still carries a heavy east coast drawl.

When he bid farewell to Premier, he said he had no intention of retiring. He instantly found directorships with Australia's Eastern Petroleum and the trading company, Maxvol.

He was talked into joining Burren by Mr O'Sullivan, a geophysicist. Burren's key asset is a 25 per cent interest in five Turkmenistan oil and gas fields which make up the Nebit Dag interest. Burren is working there alongside operator Mobil (40 per cent) and Monument Oil and Gas (35 per cent).

Last week Monument told analysts that latest reports from the area were extremely encouraging and said there was the potential to double the value of Monument's holdings.

Monument rushed out new figures on reserves to head off their publication in the financing doc-



Roland Shaw: Back in the limelight. Photograph: FT

Scottish Media sells stake in Ulster TV after bid rejection

By Peter Thal Larsen

Scottish Media Group yesterday sold its 18.2 per cent stake in Ulster Television, the Northern Ireland ITV franchise, to Canadian media group CanWest after failing to convince Ulster's board to accept a takeover bid.

SMG yesterday revealed that it had approached Ulster earlier this year with a view to making a 240p a share bid for the rest of the company. However, Ulster's board rejected the offer, which SMG described as "full". SMG subsequently decided to sell its shares to CanWest, which offered to pay 250p for them.

CanWest, which already had a 12 per cent stake in Ulster, was subsequently forced to sell some of its shares to bring its holding down to 29.9 per cent - the maximum stake current broadcasting rules allow a company from outside the European Union to own in a British ITV company.

However, CanWest said it had no interest in owning Ulster. The company sees an overlap with its investment in the newly-launched TV3 in Ireland, where it has a 45 per cent stake. The company is keen to foster co-operation between the two companies.

David Asper, executive vice president of CanWest said: "We have acquired our position as a strategic investment and believe that it will foster a productive and collaborative relationship with TV3 in the Republic of Ireland."

For SMG, meanwhile, the deal is attractive because it keeps Ulster out of the hands of the big three ITV players: Granada, Carlton and United News & Media.

"This transaction is a good deal for our shareholders," said Andrew Flanagan, chief executive of SMG. "It should ensure that Ulster remains independent of other existing ITV franchise holders at a critical time."

SMG, which owns Scottish TV and the Glasgow Herald, built up its shareholding in Ulster last year. In August, when SMG increased its holding to 13.1 per cent, it said it had no plans to make an offer for Ulster.

The buying pushed up Ulster's share price from 130p earlier in the year to a high of 265p in November. Yesterday, they put on 0.5p to close at 243p.

SMG said it had made an exceptional profit of £3.5m on the sale. The company paid an average of 209p per share for the stake. SMG plans to use the £23.9m proceeds to reduce current borrowings and to fund on-going investment. Its shares were unchanged at 671p.

Analysts said the company was now likely to concentrate on its businesses in Scotland, where it still has some headroom for expansion in other media such as radio. However, they also said that Ulster would ultimately end up in the hands of one of the larger ITV companies.

Barclays cools rumours of Standard Chartered bid

By Lea Paterson

Barclays yesterday moved to quash rumours it was poised to bid for Standard Chartered, a rival bank, although it hinted at the possibility of future acquisitions.

In a carefully worded statement, Barclays said: "Barclays wishes to clarify that, while it continues to monitor developments among competitors throughout the financial services sector, it is not in discussions with Standard Chartered".

In a separate statement, Standard Chartered said it was "not in discussions with any party concerning a merger or a takeover".

The two statements followed weekend press reports that Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, made merger overtures to Malcolm Williamson, Standard Chartered's chief executive, over dinner at Chef Nico's, an exclusive London restaurant.

Barclays played down suggestions that Mr Taylor had, without encouragement from Standard Chartered, made an overt approach. One said: "The conversation was not as one-sided as has been reported."

Sources close to Standard Chartered disagreed. One said: "We're a bit confused about all this. He [Mr Taylor] invited Malcolm to dinner. He suggested the restaurant. He made the suggestion."

Separately, Barclays announced Sir Andrew Large, former chair of the Securities and Investment Board, is to replace Sir Peter Middleton as deputy chairman of the bank.

Outlook, page 21

STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5702.80	-48.80	-0.85	5780.00	4189.10	3.15
FTSE 250	4044.80	15.10	0.30	5032.20	4384.20	3.09
FTSE 350	2716.10	-17.50	-0.64	2736.90	2075.70	3.14
FTSE All Share	2644.95	-15.53	-0.58	2663.45	2056.07	3.12
FTSE SmallCap	2445.50	7.80	0.31	2458.10	2182.10	2.84
FTSE Prevaling	1336.60	-4.80	-0.36	1346.50	965.90	0.98
FTSE AIM	1005.30	0.10	0.01	8451.81	6356.78	1.66
Dow Jones	8408.21	-6.73	-0.08	20910.79	14488.21	0.92
Nikkei	16609.49	-146.75	-0.88	16820.31	7909.13	3.67
Hong Kong	10685.21	85.42	0.81	16820.31	7909.13	3.67
S&P 500	4657.54	54.89	1.19	4623.01	3175.96	1.65

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94
1.25	5.83	5.94

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35
1.6455	1.6335	163.35

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.3679	Italy (lira)	2.866
Austria (schillings)	20.34	Japan (yen)	207.92
Belgium (francs)	59.80	Malta (lira)	0.6280
Canada (\$)	2.2656	Netherlands (guilders)	3.2602
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8446	Norway (kroner)	12.17
Denmark (kroner)	11.10	Portugal (escudos)	294.82
Finland (markka)	8.9487	Spain (pesetas)	244.63
France (francs)	6.9399	South Africa (rand)	7.7718
Germany (marks)	2.9020	Sweden (kroner)	12.93
Greece (drachmes)	499.82	Switzerland (francs)	2.2521
Hong Kong (\$)	12.28	Turkey (lira)	356.870
Ireland (pounds)	1.1603	USA (\$)	1.5969

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Asia crisis weighs down HSBC

HSBC was the darling of the banking sector until the bubble burst in South-east Asia. The recent economic upheaval in the region has taken its toll on its shares, which have shed more than a third of their value since the real extent of the crisis came to light. In the year to December, the banking group made pre-tax profits of £4.97bn, up 10 per cent and more in line with recent forecasts. But the figures were way below City predictions at this time last year, before the Asian crisis broke.

Yesterday, shares closed at 1175p, up 3p on the day, and off their recent lows following some signs of a revival in confidence in Asia. The key question for would-be investors, now is not whether the Asian crisis has affected the bank's profits, which it undoubtedly has, but whether the crisis itself is past its worst.

HSBC's exposure to South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand, the three countries the IMF has been forced to bail out so far, is relatively low. But the bank has a large exposure to the Hong Kong market,

which accounts for around a third of group assets. And although the Hong Kong economy has taken less of a battering than some in the region, with interest rates still running high there could be some nasty surprises around the corner.

That aside, the picture is pretty healthy. Midland Bank is doing well, with profits up 28 per cent and the cost-income ratio, at 57.5 per cent, far lower than many of its high street rivals. Things also seem to be on the up in Latin America, where HSBC has made a variety of acquisitions over the last year.

There is no denying HSBC has some great banking businesses. Moreover, if the pound's strength continues, the bank's decision to begin accounting in US dollars will give profits a helping hand. On the downside though, the group has signalled it is unlikely to make a major acquisition in the short term, and the shares are bound to be sensitive to any further downturn in Asia over the coming months.

Forecasts from Salomon Smith Barney put HSBC on a forward p/e of around 13, a substantial discount to the sector. But given the uncertainty in Asia, the rating looks about right.

HSBC: At a glance

Market value: £15.5bn, share price 1775p (+3)

Trading record: 1994 1995 1996 1997

Operating (2bn) 7.6 8.5 9.6 11.4

Income 11.4 12.5 13.6 14.7

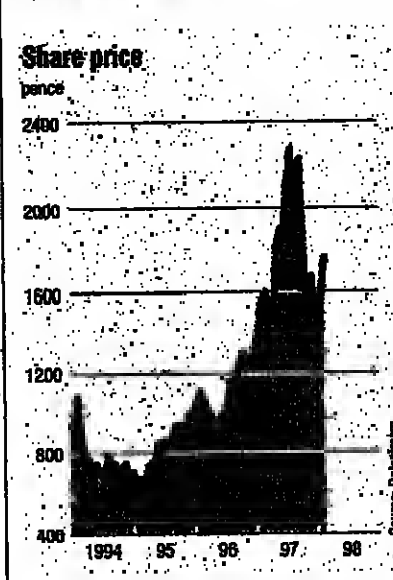
Profit 4.97 5.12 5.27 5.42

Earnings per share (p) 79.6 94.0 117.6 125.7

Dividend (p) 47.0 52.0 57.0 60.0

Share price (p) 1175 1180 1190 1200

Source: Dunham



Ultra finds the right defence niche

On the face of it, Ultra should be having a hard time. To begin with, it's an engineer, with substantial dollar-denominated exports. Second, with a market capitalisation of just £247m, it's a tiddler in the defence industry - a market where even a giant such as British Aerospace is deemed not to be large enough to survive on its own.

These factors have not stopped Ultra's share price from rising by over 50 per cent since the group joined the stock market 18 months ago. Judging by yesterday's full-year results, the rise is fully justified.

Ultra concentrates on niche products that the larger defence industry players cannot be bothered with. Its traditional strength is in sonobuoys, which are usually dropped into the sea from aircraft to help detect vessels like submarines. But it also supplies the landing gear computers for the Airbus and makes sophisticated equipment which cools the tips of heat-seeking missiles. Ultra spends roughly a quarter of its revenues on developing new products, but the beauty of the business is that most of that spending is funded by its customers.

Recently, Ultra has been concentrating on winning new orders. Its most recent coup was a £32m contract to supply sonobuoys to the Ministry of Defence.

That took its forward order book over £250m, a substantial chunk of which will be realised this year. In the meantime, Ultra's share of work on the Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft has grown to £56m.

Cashflow is strong, too. Despite spending £4.8m on acquisitions last year Ultra added more than £3m to its cash pile last year, taking its reserves to £9m and leaving plenty of room for future deals. But with such a long-term, predictable business, Ultra is in no hurry to acquire.

Ultra's pre-tax profits rose to £18.1m (£14.1m) in 1997. Merrill Lynch forecasts profits of £20.5m this year placing the shares, down 2p yesterday to 380p, on a forward multiple of 18. Not cheap but, in Ultra's case, fully justified.

Regent Inns can keep on growing

Regent Inns has produced a princely performance since it came to the stock market five years ago. But concerns that its phenomenal growth rate is bound to slow have cast a shadow over the group in the last 12 months. In that time it has underperformed the market by more than 20 per cent and its shares have fallen from a high of 373.5p to close at 334p yesterday.

To some extent the fears are justified. With billions of pounds being poured into the pub market by all the major groups, returns are bound to fall. Intense competition from a host of new themed bars and restaurants is taking its toll on Regent's like-for-like sales growth, which continues to slip.

Planning delays of up to 18 months will limit the speed with which it can expand its estate. And it will struggle to maintain operating margins of more than 29 per cent, which are already among the best in the industry.

However the fall in the share price looks harsh. Regent is still likely to grow at a rate which would turn most of its rivals green with envy. It will prove tougher to find decent sites in London, but there is plenty of scope to take its bars, including its Walkabout Inns and Jangleme comedy clubs, around the country. Its strong management team have proved deft at finding the best locations and its cashflow will easily support at least another 20 openings a year.

Pre-tax profits for the six months to January rose 37 per cent to £7.3m. Analysts forecast full year profits of around £16m, rising to £20m the following year, putting the shares on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 21, then 17. That looks very reasonable for a group which should more than double its size over the next five years.

Grade sells First Leisure's bingo to managers for £38m

Michael Grade, the former head of Channel 4, yesterday pulled off his first major strategic move at First Leisure since joining the bars to bowling group as chairman last summer, by selling its Riva bingo division for £38m to the division's management team. Riva is the third largest bingo club in the UK with 22 clubs and five more planned. It has been savaged by the National Lottery and in the year to 31 October it made an operating loss of £2.2m.

House prices driven up

A shortage of properties is continuing to drive house prices higher. All regions in England and Wales, except the North-west, saw prices rise in January, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Its quarterly survey of estate agents for the three months to the end of January showed a small increase in the number of homes coming on to the market. But this did not meet the marked shortage which continued to send prices higher, with the problem most severe in the South-east. RICS predicted prices on average will rise by about 6 per cent this year.

Independent statistics plan

Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, will today announce plans to create an independent official statistical service, as promised by Labour in its election manifesto. The Office for National Statistics has already tackled one of the Government's main concerns with its decision to improve the presentation of figures on the jobs market. A period of consultation with statistics users is expected to follow today's announcement.

Midshires profits ahead

Profits at Birmingham Midshires, the fourth largest building society, rose 11.4 per cent to £50.5m in its final year of trading before it is acquired by Royal Bank of Scotland. Earnings growth was boosted by a 16.2 per cent rise in gross leading to £946.5m. Mike Jackson, chief executive, said: "As well as achieving organic growth, we reinforced our determination to grow through acquisition and we continue to be on the look out for quality additions to the family at the right price." Royal Bank is paying up to £630m for Birmingham Midshires.

Cadbury buys bottlers

Cadbury Schweppes, the chocolate and soft drinks group, yesterday soothed City worries over its drinks distribution in the US with the £441m purchase of two American bottling companies. The company said the deals will secure the future of its 7-Up brand and others in the American soft drinks market. The City had been concerned that Cadbury was over-reliant on the bottling and distribution system of arch-rival Coca-Cola. Cadbury will be a minority equity partner with Carlyle Group in the acquisition of Midwest Beverage America and Select Beverages, but it will have full management control of the new group, to be called American Bottling Company. Cadbury Schweppes shares rose 20.5p to 756.5p.

Confusion over Indonesia

Confusion still surrounds Indonesia's plans to establish a currency board in a bid to stabilise the local currency, which has fallen more than 70 per cent in value since July. Yesterday Mar'ie Muhammad, the finance minister, told parliament he was still working on the plan but was awaiting a final decision from President Suharto on when it would be implemented. The news came 24 hours after Robert Rubin, US Treasury Secretary, offered his congratulations to Indonesia for dropping the plan.

Centrica in 'take or pay' deal

Centrica, the gas supply company, is paying £43m for significant reductions on the bulk of its high priced "take or pay" contracts with Phillips Petroleum, Fina and Agip. As a result, prices will be reduced to current market levels on the remaining field reserves from October 1998, the company said.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Advent Automotive (F)	112.2m (87.13m)	7.26m (6.28m)	5.7p (5p)	2.3p (2.3p)
Brownies Leisure (F)	2.44m (2.17m)	0.325m (0.249m)	28.3p (23.1p)	7.5p (5.0p)
Brexit Dolphin (F)	48.47m (41.50m)	7.22m (5.03m)	20.8p (15.1p)	8.5p (8.0p)
Community Hospitals (F)	29.0m (25.7m)	8.04m (4.95m)	11.9p (8.8p)	4.4p (3.3p)
Coolstar Trust (F)	-	0.983m (0.955m)	3.89p (4.04p)	1.8p (2.0p)
Byrne Group (F)	1.9m (0.014m)	-1.92m (-1.44m)	-8.5p (-8.4p)	nil
Hibernian Group (F)	-	11.43m (31.3m)	61.5p (44.7p)	3.7p (12.2p)
HSBC (F)	-	4.97m (4.92m)	120p (-)	50p (41p)
Mayflower (F)	392.7m (274.0m)	33.3m (17.9m)	10.23p (5.52p)	1.55p (2.75p)
Regent Inns (F)	25.42m (20.56m)	9.04m (5.98m)	9.2p (5.2p)	1.2p (1.0p)
TIG (F)	518.8m (508.2m)	30.85m (36.18m)	15.7p (17.0p)	9.5p (8.5p)
Ultra Electronics (F)	143.4m (123.8m)	18.06m (14.09m)	20.3p (15.1p)	7.2p (-)
Wyndham Motor City (F)	61.51m (70.29m)	1.57m (1.45m)	33.00p (56.55p)	5.0p (-)
Zalco (F)	24.2m (21.4m)	7.86m (6.90m)	15.5p (12.8p)	6.7p (5.0p)

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OUTLOOK ON BARCLAYS' HUNT FOR A PARTNER, THE WAY FORWARD FOR JAPAN, AND BRITISH AIRWAYS' LATEST VISION OF THE FUTURE

Barclays looks desperate for a deal, any deal

FIRST NatWest. Now Standard Chartered. Tomorrow, who knows, Credit Lyonnais? Barclays' hunt for a partner with whom to "consolidate" seems to be taking on an increasingly desperate air. Martin Taylor's belief in the consolidated future of banking, both domestic and international, is well known but does the Barclays' chief executive really need to be touting himself around town with such apparent abandon?

From the outside, this begins to look like a man without a strategy. We know a merger with NatWest was suggested some months back. We now know some kind of a suggestion was also put recently to Standard Chartered, albeit in an off the cuff manner which may not have been wholly serious. And there are persistent rumours that any day now Barclays will turn round and merge with the Pru.

While all three of these potential partners fit in with the general theme of consolidation in the financial services industry, they are in truth all so different one from another as reasonably to raise the question of what on earth is going on here. How can Barclays seriously lobby for a merger with NatWest one week, then turn round and start working on something wholly different the next. NatWest would be a cost cutting domestic merger, consolidating Barclays already powerful position in UK retail banking. Standard Chartered would for Barclays be a leap into the uncharted waters of international banking.

All managements need to have a fall back plan, of course, but this begins to look less like a plan B than someone who's just

got to do a deal, any deal. That's always a dangerous thing. Mr Taylor was travelling yesterday and was therefore unavailable for comment but he really does need to say something to the City; his search for a merger partner looks more and more open to ridicule. There were almost open recriminations yesterday about the now famous Chez Nico dinner with Malcolm Williamson, chief executive of Standard. Who invited whom, who suggested a merger, who leaked it to the press, and why? The whole thing is plainly getting out of hand; it smacks of loss of control.

Does Barclays really need to do a deal, or is this not simply the pursuit of size for the sake of it? You don't need much of a memory to recall the days (though it was before Mr Taylor's time) when Barclays was constantly vying with NatWest for the position of Britain's biggest bank - largest by market value, largest number of branches (nobody wants that accolade anymore) largest profits, largest bad debt provision etc. That was in the 1980s. Both have since been overtaken by what in those days was an also ran, Lloyds.

In part, Lloyds achieved this breakthrough via that much forgotten but usually rewarding route to business success - hard graft and sensible management. As the other two were recklessly expanding their loan books and pursuing the testosterone driven world of investment banking, Lloyds was sticking to its knitting and being careful not to miss a stitch.

But it was also down to a couple of big takeovers - first Cheltenham and Gloucester

building society, and then TSB. It is not unreasonable of Mr Taylor to dream of becoming the biggest once more, but it is a crude yardstick of success and if the ambition of it fails to create shareholder value along the way, it isn't worth a fig. Sir Andrew Large, whose appointment as deputy chairman at Barclays was announced yesterday, may find he has a few wings to clip by the time he arrives.

There is no quick fix for Japan

THE JAPANESE were miffed that the other six members of the G7 ganged up on them at the finance ministers' meeting at the weekend. Senior Japanese politicians continue to insist that steps already taken to reflate the economy are sufficient. This is plainly nonsense, even if Japanese annoyance about the public ding-dong is understandable. Japan looks dangerously close to economic and financial collapse, and with it the rest of Asia. All the same, it is not clear that the big tax giveaways proposed by the Americans and others are the right solution.

Let's forget for now the fact that the IMF has until very recently been warning Japan to get its ballooning government deficit and debt under control. A bigger deficit probably wouldn't help anyway. Consumers are saving, not spending. Company profits are too low to benefit from a tax cut. And the government has already spent a fortune on public works white elephants. If the government has to

borrow heavily to deliver the tax cuts, the money might simply end up going round in a circle and the whole thing would be a zero sum game in terms of inflation.

Turning to monetary policy, the Bank of Japan could hardly cut interest rates any lower. Besides, demand management cannot tackle the country's deep-seated structural problems. Banks have lent to industry on non-commercial terms for decades, with the edifice propped up by the collateral of land and shares whose artificially inflated prices have now collapsed.

There is also a third way - to monetise the bad debts of the banking system. The effect of such an approach would not be dissimilar to printing money and then disseminating it randomly through the economy, perhaps by dropping it from helicopters. In most countries this would be a highly inflationary thing but in a country where the main enemy is deflation, the effect might be beneficial. The Japanese government has already made as much public money available to the banks as the US authorities did in the aftermath of the savings and loan crisis. The problem is persuading the banks - reluctant to be seen needing the assistance - into accepting it.

And in any case, shoring up the capital base of the banking system may not be enough either. The idea is that the banks issue bonds to the government - in effect passing on their own bad debts - but they still need to inject the money they get in return into the economy. The authorities will have to hope that structural reform such as deregulation of restricted markets like telecoms will create suf-

ficient profitable opportunities for lenders. As can be seen, the G7 is wrong to push for a quicker fix. There is none.

An airline without any aircraft

BOB AYLING is trying hard to forget that he once dreamt of turning British Airways into a virtual airline. The concept looked good on paper but in practice it shattered morale because staff understandably took it as a euphemism for redundancy. What are we to make, therefore, of the BA chief executive's latest vision - an airline without any aircraft?

BA has asked Boeing and Airbus to come up with "innovative" ways of delivering £2bn worth of new jets. In plain man's language, what BA wants is to get the use of the aircraft without also being lumbered with the cost of ownership. It is an inevitably development. Why have big lumpy assets like aircraft weighing down the balance sheet when an airline has so many other calls on its investment programme?

Operating leases have long been fashionable as a means of supplying aircraft and BA itself has been at the cutting edge of new financing wheezes such as taking "put" options on jets and engines. Now it looks like going one step further and offloading all the costs of ownership, including residual valuations, back onto manufacturers in exchange for a straight rental payment. Others may not find it quite so easy to do. But BA is big enough to ensure that Boeing and Air-

GDP slows down to 0.4% as sterling squeezes exports

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE ECONOMY grew more slowly than expected in the final quarter of last year, with growth trimmed sharply by the squeeze on exports. The contrast between booming demand at home and a rapidly deteriorating trade position could scarcely have been sharper.

The increase in GDP in the fourth quarter was just 0.4 per cent, revised down from the initial estimate of 0.5 per cent and less than half the rise in the third quarter.

The Office for National Statistics also revised its estimates for earlier quarters, trimming GDP growth for 1997 as a whole to 3.2 per cent from the initial estimate of 3.3 per cent.

The surprisingly weak figures trimmed three pence off

sterling's exchange rate against the German mark, taking it to just over DM2.95.

Consumer spending bounced by 1.3 per cent, taking its year-on-year rise to the highest since mid-1989, at 4.5 per cent. Altogether domestic spending, including investment and government expenditure, added 1.5 per cent to the economy's growth, in its strongest quarterly rise since 1988.

But falling exports and a jump in imports knocked a full percentage point off overall fourth-quarter growth, leaving the overall expansion subdued.

The figures did little to budge any City experts in their views about interest rates. Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said all of the strength in the economy was concentrated in business and financial services, which accounted for less than a quar-

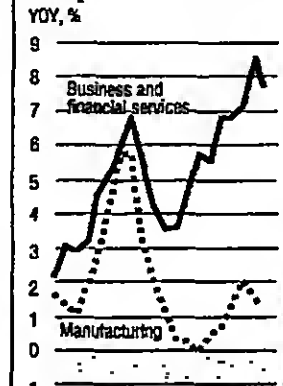
ter of output. "Even 2 per cent on interest rates would not stop companies speeding to tackle the millennium bug," he said.

In the other camp, Adam Cole at HSBC James Capel, predicted the Bank of England would increase the cost of borrowing again because it was now focusing on the strength of demand and pay pressures at home.

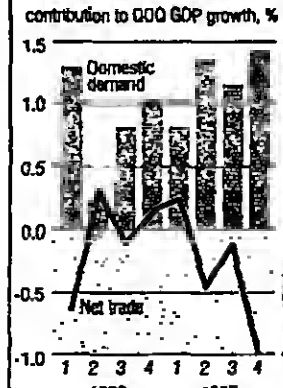
The diverging fortunes of consumers and exporters was mirrored in the split between manufacturing and services. Manufacturing output fell by 0.4 per cent in the fourth quarter, while total industrial production dropped by 1.1 per cent thanks to a big fall in electricity, gas and water supply.

On the other hand, total services output climbed by 1.1 per cent, with both business services and finance and telecommunications surging.

Dual economy: output



Dual economy: demand



Investcorp trumps Quebecor with agreed bid for Watmoughs

By Peter Thal Larsen

INVESTCORP, the financial group backed by Middle Eastern investors, yesterday waded into the bid battle for Watmoughs with an agreed offer valuing the printing company at £250m. It also unveiled plans to create a major force in the European printing industry by merging Watmoughs with one of its UK rivals.

Investcorp has also tabled a

bid for British Printing Company, the privately owned printing group which specialises in weekly magazines. Richard Warner, a director of Investcorp, said a combination of Watmoughs and BPC would be a more viable competitor in the European market.

The 345p a share bid for Watmoughs trumped an earlier offer, pitched at 257p a share, from the Canadian group

Quebecor. Watmoughs had rejected Quebecor's offer.

Last night, Quebecor said it would "clarify its position" after the competition authorities had decided whether to refer Investcorp's bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Earlier yesterday, the Government gave Quebecor's own offer the green light.

Quebecor said: "The public

interest issues raised by this bid regarding the impact on both customers and employment in the UK are significantly more complex than those raised in Quebecor's bid for Watmoughs."

However Investcorp, whose bid is conditional on it not being referred to the MMC, pointed out that BPC and Watmoughs would have less than 20 per cent of the UK market. "We don't believe we will have any regula-

HSBC Holdings plc Results for 1997

Comment by Sir William Purves,
HSBC Group Chairman

"The financial performance of HSBC Holdings in 1997 was satisfactory, with pre-tax profit up 10 per cent and strong growth in operating profit before provisions, up 16 per cent. Attributable profit of £3,353 million was 8 per cent ahead of the 1996 figure.

"Our Board of Directors has declared a second interim dividend of 30 pence per ordinary share. Together with the first interim dividend of 20 pence per share, the total dividend for the year will be 50 pence per share, an increase of 22 per cent over 1996.

"Our commercial banking businesses in the United Kingdom, North America and the Middle East produced results well ahead of 1996, while business in Asia was affected by turbulent conditions.

"The second half of 1997 and early 1998 have been dominated by these economic difficulties. The instability, brought about by dramatically weakening exchange rates, attracted significant customer deposits to our branches in the region and a larger volume of customer business to our treasury dealing rooms. The coincidence of weak exchange rates, significantly lower stock exchange levels and high interest rates in many countries, however, has led to a deterioration in credit quality, the full impact of which is only beginning to emerge.

"The Group has set aside £175 million in the form of a special general provision, reflecting this unusual level of uncertainty; and, additionally, other general provisions have been increased by £116 million to £1,052 million.

"Exchange rates again had an impact on our reported results, and at constant exchange rates, growth in attributable profit of 8 per cent would have been higher, at 12 per cent. Since the US dollar and currencies closely linked to it form the main currency bloc in which the Group's business is transacted, our Board has decided that the Company will report its results in US dollars starting in 1998. Dividends will be declared in US dollars; however, shareholders will continue to be entitled to receive their dividends alternatively in sterling or Hong Kong dollars or as scrip.

"We entered 1998 with sound liquidity, strong capital and a conservative balance sheet, attributes which have supported our profitable growth and served us well during weaker economic periods. Our business is well balanced geographically and by product line, and our commitment to cost discipline and profitable growth remains unchanged.

"It has been my privilege to work with the dedicated men and women of the HSBC Group for many years. Although I shall retire from the Group at this year's Annual General Meeting, during an interesting and, perhaps, difficult period, I am confident that their commitment will help HSBC continue to seize opportunities and reward shareholders in the challenging times ahead."

For the year	1997	1996
Profit before tax	£4,971m	£4,524m
Profit attributable to shareholders	£3,355m	£3,112m
Earnings per share	125.70p	117.61p
Dividends per share	50.00p	41.00p
Capital resources	£25,236m	£23,486m

- Operating profit before provisions up 16%
- Pre-tax profit up 10% and attributable profit up 8%
- In Hong Kong dollar terms, operating profit before provisions up 21%, pre-tax profit up 15% and attributable profit up 13%
- Earnings per share up 7%
- Dividends per share up 22%
- Second interim dividend of 30 pence per share, with scrip dividend alternative
- Total capital ratio 14.2% and tier 1 capital ratio 9.3%

The 1997 Annual Report and Accounts will be sent to shareholders on or about 17 April 1998 and copies may be obtained from Group Public Affairs at the address below. Custodians or nominees that wish to distribute copies to their clients may request copies for collection by writing to Group Public Affairs. Requests should be received by not later than 6 March 1998.

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Web: www.hsbcgroup.com

Ewart board members threaten chairman with legal action

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE CHIEF executive and other board members of Ewart, the property group, yesterday threatened to take legal action against their own chairman, Brian O'Connor.

The move is the latest twist in an acrimonious battle for control of the Belfast company, which received a new £25.8m bid

approach yesterday. Moyne, a shelf company created for the bid by drinks entrepreneur Paul Hunt, yesterday offered to buy Ewart for 79p a share in cash. This compares with last week's 75p revised offer worth £24.6m from Dublin-based Dunloe House and a share price last night of 78.5p, up 3.5p.

A majority of independent board members at Ewart agreed

to accept the Moyne approach but Mr O'Connor voted against it and is urging shareholders to accept the lower offer from Dunloe House which already holds a 26 per cent stake in Ewart and has two places on its board. Mr O'Connor owns 16 per cent of Ewart through his Fortress Hill company.

Barry Gilligan, Ewart's chief executive, said: "We are taking

up O'Connor's behaviour with the Takeover Panel and are considering whether to take legal action against him." He believed Mr O'Connor was not acting in the interest of shareholders.

Mr O'Connor said in a statement: "I believe the uncertainty created by the bid situation over the past months should be brought to an end. My action is designed to achieve this."

Waterstone's poised for sale to EMI venture

WH SMITH could announce the sale of its Waterstone's books division to a joint venture led by EMI as early as today. The two groups were working through the night to hammer out final terms which should value the chain at £300m, writes Nigel Cope.

Tim Waterstone, the book-selling entrepreneur who founded the chain, will be non-executive chairman. He will work almost full-time to start with though may take a less hands-on role later on.

The deal will not initially include Mr Waterstone's Daisy & Tom children's shops. Management on both sides felt the due diligence process had already taken long enough and were reluctant to delay the deal any further. However, Daisy & Tom is expected to become part of the group at a later stage.

EMI is leading the joint venture, which also includes Advent International, the US venture capital group which is backing Mr Waterstone.

The completion of the deal could lead to around £250m being returned to shareholders.

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Application has been made to the London Stock Exchange for the C Shares and the New Ordinary Shares arising on conversion of the C Shares to be admitted to the Official List of the London Stock Exchange ("the Official List").

It is expected that admission to the Official List will become effective and that dealings in the C Shares will commence on 2 April 1998.

ABERDEEN CONVERTIBLE INCOME TRUST PLC

(Incorporated and registered in England and Wales under the Companies Act 1985 with registered number 2804441)

Placing and Offer by
Greig Middleton & Co. Limited
of up to 25 million C Shares at 100p per share
payable in full on application

Extension of Life

Dividends and Interim Results

Share Capital immediately following Admission of the C Shares

Authorised		Issued and fully paid	
Number of Ordinary Shares	Amount	Number of Ordinary Shares	Amount
35,200,000	£8,800,000	22,743,000	£5,685,750
Number of C Shares	Amount	Number of C Shares	Amount
25,000,000	£25,000,000	25,000,000	£25,000,000

On the assumption that the maximum number of C Shares are issued pursuant to the Placing and Offer.

Copies of the prospectus which was published on 23 February 1998 may be obtained during normal business hours on any weekday (Saturdays and public holidays excepted) from the date of this notice up to and including 25 February 1998, for collection only, from the Company Announcements Office of the London Stock Exchange, London Stock Exchange Tower, Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1HP or during normal business hours on any weekday (Saturdays and public holidays excepted) from the date of this notice up to and including 26 March 1998 from:

Aberdeen Convertible Income Trust PLC
One Bow Churchyard
Chesapeake
London EC4M 9HH

Greig Middleton & Co. Limited
30 Lombard Street
London EC3V 9EN

Dated: 24 February 1998

Investors prepare for the worst from Safeway

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Safeway, the supermarket chain, is expected to pile high the agony today. The stock market is braced for a dismal trading statement and only continuing takeover speculation prevented the shares from falling more than 10p to 36p.

The update, it is rumoured, will show sales growth over the important 14-week Christmas and new year period by less than 3 per cent.

It is the last of the major food retailers to produce a festive trading update. One, due last month, was surprisingly postponed, a delay which set alarm bells ringing. Then last week trading director George Charters suddenly departed, underlining fears that the retailing group, which had already produced two profit warnings, could be encountering serious management problems.

There are even worries that the group has, in effect, been "buying" sales by cutting prices.

The market sees the gap

widening between Safeway, the fourth largest chain, and its bigger rivals, Tesco, Sainsbury and Asda. And although the proposed grouping of Kwik Save and Somerfield is seen as two weak players offering support to each other, there is little doubt the new group will represent increased competition to its nearest rival - Safeway.

Asda is known to be keen to swallow Safeway. Talks failed when it became apparent the Government would not welcome a £9bn Asda/Safeway alliance. Asda, it is suspected, has continued to press its case in the corridors of power. It may be that Safeway's performance has declined so miserably it may be forced to seek a friendly merger.

Sainsbury and Tesco are ruled out on competition grounds. There has been vague talk that Marks & Spencer could be interested, although an M&S strike would astonish most observers.

Safeway's shares have been as high as 42p.5p. They touched 31p in December, rallying on bid hopes.

Asda rose 2p to 204p; Sainsbury, Tesco and M&S were lower.

After last week's heroics blue chips ran out of steam with Footsie falling 48.8 points to 5,702.8. Still the supporting indices remained firm, reaching new peaks.

Profit-taking, an uncertain New York and weak futures combined to remove an early shine which took Footsie to a trading high and just 6.8 from the 5,800 milestone.

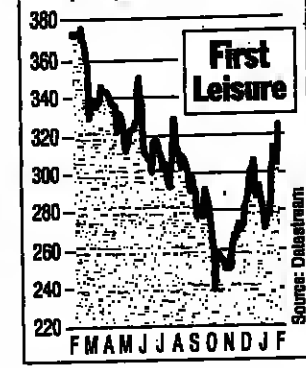
Bass celebrated its £1.8bn Inter-Continental Hotels & Resorts acquisition with a 56p gain to a 1,016p peak as fears that it paid too much were judged to be misplaced. Cadbury Schweppes, buying two US soft drink bottlers, rose 20.5p to 756.5p.

British Aerospace was another at a new high, up 29p to 1,909p. Overseas investors

have broken through the 29.5 per cent ceiling. Unless the foreign limit is relaxed - and many expect the Government to do so - the surplus shares will have to be sold, which usually means the overseas investors involved suffer a loss.

Rolls-Royce, the other aerospace group subject to a 29.5p per cent foreign limit, was little changed at 208.25p.

Share spotlight



Standard Chartered, after a weekend of takeover speculation, ended 22.5p off at 742.5p after touching 803p in heavy trading. It denied it was in talks with Barclays, little changed at 1,876p. HSBC, on results, firmed 3p to 1,775p.

The latest frenzied outbreak over Standard is yet a further illustration of the market's deep conviction that a series of mega financial deals are inevitable.

The easing of tension in the Gulf with British Petroleum off 22.5p to 805p and Enterprise Oil 6p to 554p.

First Leisure Corporation's long-awaited bingo sale lifted the shares 12.5p to 323p; General Cable, the communications group, gained 8p to 117p before confirming a bid approach after the market closed.

Ulster Television was a shade firmer at 243p. Scottish Media sold its 18.2 per cent stake at 250p a share to CanWest Global Communications.

The Canadian group which now has 29.9 per cent.

Transport Development, the transport group, surged 60.5p to 250p after producing plans to return £109m to shareholders and the sale of its plant hire business.

Body Shop International remained on edge over threats of legal action in the US, falling 6p to 121p. Merrill Lynch sell advice also hit sentiment. Brown & Jackson, the Poundstretcher chain, continued to respond to its improving trading performance, gaining 5p to 52p.

Printer Watmoughs rose 26.5p to 345p after Investcorp, a Middle Eastern group, made the signalled agreed offer - 345p.

Biocompatibles International clawed its way to 202p, up 27p, against the 130p low hit earlier this month following the unexpected departure of chief executive Alastair Taylor. Some dream of a Smith & Nephew bid.

TAKING STOCK

Robert Stephen Holdings, which holds most of the Robin family's controlling stake in Pentland, has moved in on property shell Delyn. It has acquired the stake held by American James Terlizzi and now has 25.04 per cent. Merchant bank Dawson Day has lifted its interest to 26.73 per cent. Delyn, which fought off a hostile bid last year, has more than £7m in cash. Its shares rose 1p to 117.5p.

Engineer Clyde Blowers has undertaken its first US investment presentations. Profits of around £5.8m against £1.1m are expected this year. The shares held at 251p.

Textile group Leslie Wise gained 2.5p to 14p on a bid approach. One suggestion is Joe Bloggs, the jeans maker, is interested.

Oxfen high-flyer Energiser, a dietary group, has paid £1.3m in shares for Reductogen, a drug business. Its shares rose 15p to 215p.



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Ramm

John Roberts
reports from Battersea Park

TONY PICKARD, the elder statesman of British coaches, made a plea for patience yesterday as Tim Henman prepared to put his damaged confidence to the test in Battersea Park tonight against Richard Krajicek, the 1996 Wimbledon champion.

After returning from Antwerp with his triumphant client Greg Rusedski, who on Sunday won his sixth ATP Tour singles title and rose to No 5 in the world rankings, Pickard spared a thought for Henman and his coach, David Felgate, who have suffered four first round defeats.

"They are going through the horrors, and are getting a lot of mixed opinions from people who don't know the circumstances," Pickard said. "I don't think people should stand back and criticise either Tim or David, because that is destructive."

Pickard, who helped steer Sweden's Stefan Edberg to the pinnacle of the sport and contributed towards the Czech Petr Korda's flourishing late career, introduced Henman to Britain's Davis Cup squad when he was the captain and Felgate the coach.

"People in this country have been starved of success at tennis for so many years that I suppose it's inevitable that they now have such high expectations," Pickard said. "Tim and David are new boys on the block, and they should be left to sort things out themselves. There's always a way out, and one or the other of them will cough it out."

"You can't win every match you play, otherwise you would play four tournaments a year and win the Grand Slam. There is no real difference, whatever sport it is, you go through bad times. If things are still not going right in a few months time, I'm sure Tim and David will sort it out in their own way."

Henman and Krajicek have only met once before. Henman

Battersea power: Spain's Sergi Bruguera hits down the line as the Dutchman Jan Siemerink, who won 6-1, 7-6, moves into the net during their Guardian Direct Cup match yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

ending the Dutchman's Wimbledon reign and advancing to the quarter-finals last summer.

Krajicek, who has won the St. Petersburg title and eight of his nine matches this year, understands Henman's current difficulties. "Players always find their own media the most negative," he said. "The last thing you want to talk about is a bad run of form, because you're trying to put it out of your mind."

I don't usually talk about a bad run until I'm over it."
Whisper it, but it is possible

whisper it, but it is possible for Rusedski to rocket to No 1 in the world if he wins both the \$815,000 Guardian Direct Cup here and next week's Rotterdam tournament and Pete Sampras and the group chasing the American have two bad weeks.

First, of course, comes the task of sustaining last week's im-

petus in his opening match tomorrow night against Germany's Marc-Kevin Goellner. Rusedski won their only previous contest oo clay, in the first round of the 1994 French Open.

Rusedski's success in Antwerp was built on a solo trip to Split for the Croatian Open following the disappointment of his defeat by Todd Woodbridge in the third round of the Australian Open.

"There was a reason why Greg went to Split by himself," Pickard said. "It was deliberate. I saw what was wrong at the Australian Open, something to do with Greg's approach. I wanted him to sort it out for himself. I didn't want him to have a crutch to lean on."

Pickard has also persuaded Rusedski, whose serve-volley style is most effective on the faster surfaces, to play a full sea-

son on the slow clay courts of Europe this year. "Greg won't be going to the Far East this time," Pickard said. "If he plays the clay court tournaments he will have even more strength in his all round game."

Martin Lee, who enjoyed international success as a junior, is another Briton who will concentrate on clay court events in Europe in the months to come, albeit on the Satellite and Chal-

lenger circuit. "My best results as a junior were on clay, and I think it's the best surface for learning the game," he said.

The 20-year-old Lee, who received a wild card for Battersea, was defeated in the first round yesterday by Bohdan Ulihrach, a Czech ranked No 31 in the world, 223 places above his opponent. Lee, beaten 6-4, 7-6, produced some excellent shots, both in attack and defence. He

had the first opportunity to break, in the second game of the opening set, before losing his serve at 4-4, and broke back im-

pressively in the second to force the tie-break.

TODAY'S ORDER OF PLAY (Centre Court): 1030: G Hecot (Fr) v K Kuipers (Slovak); followed by G Plick (Fr) v F Cherd (Sp); not before 2.30: P Kornek (Cz) v D Prinsal (Ger); followed by P Kornek (Swe) v Y Kafelnikov (Rus); not before 7pm: W Krawczuk (Ukr) v C Wicksdon (GB); followed by R Kraljick (Neth) v T Herman (GB) (Court One); 12pm: F Demul (Bel) v G Blanc (Sp); followed by M Gustafsson (Swe) v B Stevens (NZ); followed by M Damm (Cz) v P Schuster (Ger); followed by A Kitzmirm (Aust) and F Wiber (Neth) v G Nencicic and I Lubicki (Cro); followed by N Broad (GB) and P Norve

Today we publish the updated results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. The league table includes all scores up to February 15th. The player list includes scores from all games played until February 22nd. Neither set of scores includes results from the FA Cup. The manager who is the overall winner will win a trip to the world cup finals in France next Summer.

Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e.: if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in *The Independent* and repeated the following Sunday in the *Independent on Sunday*.

HOW TO SCORE

player scores [REDACTED]
 clean sheet [REDACTED]
 winning goal [REDACTED] 1
 successful assist [REDACTED] 3
 -1 [REDACTED] yellow card
 -2 [REDACTED] red card
 manager's team wins [REDACTED] 3

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 22 FEBRUARY

LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 15 FEBRUARY

1	Mr C King	Seeking Victory	829
1	Mr P Tufner	Pins Up	829
1	Mr D Baker	Deja Vu	829
1	Mr D Evans	Boothend End Olds Boys	829
1	Mr J Cox	Southville FC	829
6	Mr B Sari	Simply The Best	828
7	Mr D Sari	The Untouchables	827
9	Mr D Aston	Billy Boys 2nd 11	827
9	Mr D Edmondson	Edmo United	827
10	Mr E Biele	Embley Bounders	822
10	Mr Wingrove	Team's Boys	822
10	Mr T Lyons	Diana's Demons	822
13	Miss L Wild	Amerretto AFC	821
13	Mr Archer	No Wright	821
15	Mr S Scott	Uobeachie	818
16	Mr J Hayes	Early Birds	815
17	Mr J McCrossam	Washed Up Army	812
18	Mr D Baker	Dead Heat	806
19	Mr B Brown	The Hoofers	803
19	Mr S Scott	The Dream Team	803
21	Mr A Choudi	Nickies 9th 11	802
22	Mr Brady	Look Live!y	800
22	Mr D Ackroyd	Jack Lads	800
24	Mr M Pawley	Robert's Raiders	799
25	Mr S Walker	Daniel's United	798
26	Mr M Ewins	Mikes C Team	797
26	Mr G Bell	Stunning Stunts	797
28	Mr M Ewins	Started But Will I Finish	796
28	Mr M Ewins	Mikes A Team	796
28	Mr A Mitchell	The Eye For It	796
28	Mr S Aston	Billy Boys 3rd 11	796
32	Mr G Ford	Linthorpe Rovers	793
32	Mr J Cox	Retro Rovers	793
34	Mr J McCrossam	Washed Up Army	792
34	Mr K Boyle	Clogston Rovers	792
34	Mr M Ward	Team A 40	792
37	Mr C Thomas	Scaunthorpe Extras	791
38	Mr G Bell	The Hairy Monsters	789
39	Mr S Man	Rebecca Rovers	788
40	Mr R Steer	Steer 2	787
40	Mr T Brazier	Wow For Short	787

CODE	PLAYER	TIME
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ROSE PLAYER	TEAM	WT	OP	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	
COALKEEPERS							
300	Seaman	ARS	0	49	4.0	453	Valley
303	Luhie	ARS	0	0	1.0	454	Anderson
304	Manning	ARS	0	0	1.0	455	Cost
305	Bennett	ARS	2	44	3.0	456	Elliot
306	Onken	ARS	0	0	1.0	457	Balough
307	Walsh	BAR	0	7	1.5	458	Neggin
308	Wase	BAR	0	34	4.0	459	Barnson
309	Flowers	BAR	0	0	12.0	460	Quincy
310	Vilam	BOL	1	12	1.5	461	Perkins
333	Rizzari	BOL	1	53	5.5	462	Landre
334	De Coey	CHV	0	0	1.0	463	Lebonai
335	Grodas	CHV	0	65	10.0	464	Stall
336	Ogrivovic	COV	0	37	2.2	465	Deist
337	Hedman	COV	6	22	1.0	466	Shaw
338	Nash	CRY	0	0	1.0	467	Gower
339	Day	CRY	0	0	1.0	468	Barrow
340	Poon	DER	1	60	1.2	469	Edwards
341	Smith	DER	0	0	1.0	470	Gordon
344	Flood	EVVE	24	3.0	1.5	471	Wheat
345	Gerrard	EVVE	0	0	1.0	472	Langley
346	Martin	EVVE	0	0	1.0	473	Roberts
347	Burney	LEE	0	57	3.5	474	Hredstrom
348	Keller	LEE	0	99	1.2	475	Wright
349	Poppe	LEI	0	0	1.5	476	C Powell
350	Jano	LEI	0	69	3.5	477	Phelan
351	Wagner	LEI	0	0	1.0	478	Leato
354	Schmichal	MAN	10	81	5.5	479	Thomson
355	Van Der Gouw	MAN	0	0	1.5	480	Wasson
356	Ceren	NEW	0	0	1.0	481	Wright
357	Hickman	NEW	0	21	2.5	482	Stitt
358	Jeffrey	SHEP	5	50	1.0	483	Kelly
359	Harper	SHEP	0	0	1.8	484	Hedberg
360	Bessent	SOU	0	0	1.0	485	McLaren
363	Thelmer	SOU	0	0	3.0	486	Roberts
364	Bardeen	TOR	1	14	1.0	487	Whish
365	Michukado	WHI	0	13	1.5	488	Whish
366	Sullivan	WHI	1	56	2.7	489	Wright
DEFENDERS							
400	Dixon	ARS	4	44	2.0	506	Kearney
403	Upcott	ARS	2	4	1.0	507	McGee
404	Peritt	ARS	0	63	4.2	508	Manno
405	Grimmell	ARS	10	41	2.7	509	McAuer
406	Watersburn	ARS	34	66	3.4	510	McAuer
407	Boad	ARS	0	41	3.5	511	P Neville
408	Armstrong	ARS	0	46	4.5	512	Irwin
409	Kearney	ARS	5	17	1.5	513	McAuer
420	Stanton	AV	0	42	3.0	514	McAuer
423	Southgate	AV	2	42	5.2	515	Johnston
424	Edgus	AV	0	60	4.0	516	Johnston
425	Nelson	AV	2	42	1.2	517	Ally
426	Wright	AV	2	47	3.0	518	Hobby
427	Simmon	AV	1	31	2.2	519	Peacock
428	Grayson	AV	1	46	4.0	520	Baron
439	Moses	BAR	1	32	1.5	521	Barnford
440	Appleby	BAR	0	17	2.0	522	Blondan
441	Thompson	BAR	6	6	1.0	523	Blondan
444	Krizak	BAR	0	13	1.0	524	Atbernan
445	Bieg	MAN	10	60	3.4	525	Walker
446	Le Saux	MAN	5	63	3.5	526	Le Saux
447	Coleman	MAN	0	0	3.0	527	Newhouse
448	Hendry	MAN	0	39	4.4	528	Mentoni
449	Kennedy	MAN	0	67	1.9	529	Beard
450	Hendrich	BLA	0	63	2.0	530	Bentoni

NAME	WE OF VALUE- (Lm)	CODR
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	WE	OF	VALUE	COST	PLAYER	TEAM	WE	OF	VALUE	COST
A	0	20	3.0	539	Van Gohbel	SOU	0	6	3.0	676
A	0	16	2.5	560	McKiverson	TOT	0	6	3.0	678
A	0	16	2.5	563	Seola	TOT	0	21	3.4	679
A	1	12	4.0	564	McNeill	TOT	0	20	3.0	680
A	0	19	2.5	565	Childwood	TOT	1	44	2.9	683
A	0	19	2.5	566	Asotin	TOT	0	0	2.2	684
A	0	19	2.5	567	McLaugh	TOT	0	0	1.9	685
A	0	41	3.0	568	Carr	TOT	1	56	1.3	686
A	1	83	3.0	569	Mabbutt	WH	0	16	1.2	687
A	0	19	2.5	570	Wheeler	WH	0	0	2.4	688
A	1	68	3.0	571	Rieger	WH	0	12	2.7	690
A	0	19	2.5	572	Hill	WH	0	0	3.3	691
A	0	12	2.5	573	Walt	WH	0	0	2.7	692
A	0	50	3.0	576	Fordman	WH	1	43	2.5	694
A	0	51	3.0	577	Ungey	WH	0	0	2.0	695
A	0	31	1.5	578	Wheeler	WH	0	0	2.0	696
A	0	33	3.0	579	Percy	WIM	0	0	4.0	697
A	0	14	1.0	580	Wheeler	WIM	1	28	2.0	698
A	0	14	1.0	581	Thatcher	WIM	0	1	1.5	699
A	0	14	2.0	584	McAlister	WIM	0	0	1.5	700
A	0	46	3.0	586	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	701
A	0	46	3.0	587	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	702
A	0	46	3.0	588	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	703
A	0	46	3.0	589	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	704
A	0	46	3.0	590	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	705
A	0	46	3.0	591	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	706
A	0	46	3.0	592	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	707
A	0	46	3.0	593	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	708
A	0	46	3.0	594	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	709
A	0	46	3.0	595	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	710
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A	0	46	3.0	598	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	713
A	0	46	3.0	599	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	714
A	0	46	3.0	600	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	715
A	0	46	3.0	601	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	716
A	0	46	3.0	602	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	717
A	0	46	3.0	603	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	718
A	0	46	3.0	604	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	719
A	0	46	3.0	605	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	720
A	0	46	3.0	606	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	721
A	0	46	3.0	607	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	722
A	0	46	3.0	608	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	723
A	0	46	3.0	609	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	724
A	0	46	3.0	610	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	725
A	0	46	3.0	611	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	726
A	0	46	3.0	612	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	727
A	0	46	3.0	613	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	728
A	0	46	3.0	614	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	729
A	0	46	3.0	615	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	730
A	0	46	3.0	616	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	731
A	0	46	3.0	617	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	732
A	0	46	3.0	618	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	733
A	0	46	3.0	619	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	734
A	0	46	3.0	620	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	735
A	0	46	3.0	621	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	736
A	0	46	3.0	622	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	737
A	0	46	3.0	623	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	738
A	0	46	3.0	624	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	739
A	0	46	3.0	625	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	740
A	0	46	3.0	626	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	741
A	0	46	3.0	627	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	742
A	0	46	3.0	628	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	743
A	0	46	3.0	629	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	744
A	0	46	3.0	630	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	745
A	0	46	3.0	631	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	746
A	0	46	3.0	632	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	747
A	0	46	3.0	633	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	748
A	0	46	3.0	634	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	749
A	0	46	3.0	635	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	750
A	0	46	3.0	636	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	751
A	0	46	3.0	637	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	752
A	0	46	3.0	638	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	753
A	0	46	3.0	639	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	754
A	0	46	3.0	640	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	755
A	0	46	3.0	641	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	756
A	0	46	3.0	642	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	757
A	0	46	3.0	643	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	758
A	0	46	3.0	644	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	759
A	0	46	3.0	645	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	760
A	0	46	3.0	646	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	761
A	0	46	3.0	647	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	762
A	0	46	3.0	648	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	763
A	0	46	3.0	649	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	764
A	0	46	3.0	650	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	765
A	0	46	3.0	651	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	766
A	0	46	3.0	652	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	767
A	0	46	3.0	653	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	768
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A	0	46	3.0	665	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	780
A	0	46	3.0	666	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	781
A	0	46	3.0	667	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	782
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A	0	46	3.0	674	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	789
A	0	46	3.0	675	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	790
A	0	46	3.0	676	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	791
A	0	46	3.0	677	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	792
A	0	46	3.0	678	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	793
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A	0	46	3.0	682	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	797
A	0	46	3.0	683	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	798
A	0	46	3.0	684	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	799
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A	0	46	3.0	686	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	801
A	0	46	3.0	687	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	802
A	0	46	3.0	688	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	803
A	0	46	3.0	689	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	804
A	0	46	3.0	690	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	805
A	0	46	3.0	691	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	806
A	0	46	3.0	692	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	807
A	0	46	3.0	693	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	808
A	0	46	3.0	694	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	809
A	0	46	3.0	695	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	810
A	0	46	3.0	696	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	811
A	0	46	3.0	697	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	812
A	0	46	3.0	698	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	813
A	0	46	3.0	699	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	814
A	0	46	3.0	700	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	815
A	0	46	3.0	701	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	816
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A	0	46	3.0	704	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	819
A	0	46	3.0	705	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	820
A	0	46	3.0	706	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	821
A	0	46	3.0	707	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	822
A	0	46	3.0	708	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	823
A	0	46	3.0	709	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	824
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A	0	46	3.0	711	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	826
A	0	46	3.0	712	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	827
A	0	46	3.0	713	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	828
A	0	46	3.0	714	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	829
A	0	46	3.0	715	Kinkade	WIM	0	33	1.5	830
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PLAYER	TEAM	WK	IN	VAL	AGE	TYPE	PLAYS	TEAM
Bowen	LEE	0	18	3.0	844	Huckley	845	COV
Wallace	LEE	0	74	1.0	843	Whelan	843	COV
Shayne	LEE	0	10	3.5	844	Dubbin	844	COV
Roberts	LEE	0	15	1.5	844	Swift	844	COV
Hayland	LEE	0	15	1.5	844	Laburne	844	COV
Purker	LEE	0	27	2.5	849	Dyer	849	CRY
Taylor	LEE	0	42	1.5	850	Frederick	850	CRY
Lizett	LEE	0	42	1.5	851	Sherrin	851	CRY
Lesmon	LEE	3	30	3.3	854	Sherrin	854	CRY
Clapp	LEE	4	3	3.0	855	Ward	855	CRY
Barnes	LEE	4	45	3.0	855	Ward	855	CRY
Rackingsp	NEW	0	26	3.5	857	Wanchep	857	BAE
McIntosh	NEW	0	63	1.0	857	Wanchep	857	BAE
Thomas	NEW	0	12	3.0	859	Duggan	859	LVE
Lundmarken	LIV	0	31	4.0	861	Pence	861	LVE
Clips	MAN	9	65	1.0	863	Lilly	863	LVE
Reckless	MAN	9	69	7.0	863	Lilly	863	LVE
Butt	MAN	14	7.0	7.0	864	Stank	864	LEE
Porokski	MAN	10	10	3.5	865	Finley	865	LEE
Lee	MAN	10	35	3.5	867	Towler	867	LIV
Batty	NEW	0	25	3.6	868	Rae	868	LIV
Phillips	NEW	0	11	2.0	869	Ward	869	MAN
Boosey	NEW	0	40	2.5	870	Schellen	870	MAN
Kesturah	NEW	0	21	2.0	873	Cole	873	LEE
Blindler	SHEF	0	0	0	874	Boosey	874	LEE
Wright	SHEF	0	0	1.6	875	Sherrin	875	MAN
Whittingham	SHEF	0	26	1.7	876	Sherrin	876	MAN
Carbone	SHEF	0	54	3.0	877	Sherrin	877	MAN
Wrightson	SHEF	0	1	1.5	878	Apurilla	878	NEW
Blair	SOU	0	2	1.5	880	Permand	880	NEW
Duckley	SOU	2	26	1.2	883	Godmonson	883	NEW
Anderson	SOU	0	46	3.0	883	Godmonson	883	NEW
Gray	TOT	0	47	4.5	885	Hamphrey	885	SHEF
Girdle	TOT	0	11	3.2	886	Fair	886	SHEF
Stanton	TOT	0	46	3.0	886	Fair	886	SHEF
Nielsen	TOT	0	19	1.0	887	Le Tisser	887	SOU
Wrightson	TOT	0	21	2.5	889	Oatstead	889	SOU
McHughes	WIM	0	31	3.0	891	Armstrong	891	TOT
Moncur	WH	0	14	2.5	893	Theron	893	TOT
Slack	WH	0	2	1.0	893	Theron	893	TOT
Berkovic	WH	4	63	1.5	895	Klanc	895	WH
Loane	WH	0	20	3.0	895	Holworth	895	BOL
Long	WIM	0	19	1.8	896	Blair	896	WIM
Arndley	WIM	1	36	2.0	899	Easi	899	WIM
McHughes	WIM	1	1	2.0				
	WIM	0	14	3.0				
MANAGERS								
					501	Wenger	501	ARS
					502	Wenger	502	ARS
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					504	Wright	504	BLA
					507	Gullitt	507	CRY
					508	Strachan	508	CRY
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					537	Ferguson	537	LIV
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COACHES								
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هَذَا مِنَ الْأَصْلِ

SOUTHWELL

1.45: 1. KILLARNEY JAZZ (7 Lucas) 7-4
2. Mr Pundit Switch 96-1; 3. Billy Mountain
12-1; 4. ram. NK, 1 (J Wharton, Melton
Monctony) Votes £220; £10 £280 QD: DF:
£280; £10 £280; Throat: £280QD: DF:
£280.

2.15: 1. PIPE MUSIC (Clowther) 7-2; 2.
MUD Tort (H 4 say); 3. River Plowher 7-2; B
rren, H, 97 (P Hastic, Middleton)
£640; £10 £400; £100 DF: £100 CSP: £280;
Throat: £335; Tort: £520 NR; Mystery Man
2.45: 1. PRIVATE DESPATCH (A Mc
Carthy) 7-2; Military owns 1; 3. Emerald
£120; £10 £120; £100 DF: £120; CSP:
£1046.

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Gallacher set to fight 'racist' claim

Football

By Alan Nixon

KEVIN GALLACHER is at odds with Eyal Berkovitch over a red card and an alleged racist slur. The Blackburn Rovers striker is angry that his appeal to referee Peter Jones against his sending-off 10 days ago following a clash with West Ham's Israeli midfielder was turned down by Jones yesterday.

Gallacher immediately rang the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, Gordon Taylor, and is also consulting solicitors about possible legal action against Berkovitch, who claimed to have been elbowed in the eye by the Scot.

Berkovitch's claim about an elbow being used has incensed Gallacher, who is considering civil action, and is equally angry at suggestions that he was

one of three Blackburn players who made anti-Semitic remarks to Berkovitch during the tempestuous FA Cup fifth-round tie. "I am sick," Gallacher said about Jones' decision not to reconsider the red card. "I am definitely taking steps towards clearing my name on this. I am not going to sit on the fence and take this any longer. I know I did nothing wrong and I know I am innocent. I will miss three and a half games over this and it is scandalous. This is my livelihood. Our season could be badly damaged by the time I get back. It's not right."

"I was confident that the referee would see what happened, that's why I asked him through the club to think again. All I can do at the moment to put this right is go out and settle the score with West Ham in the replay on Wednesday, but after that I have to clear my name."

The trouble started when

Berkovitch fell over after a tackle by Billy McKinlay. Gallacher ran over to him and the pair exchanged insults. Minutes later, with the pair chasing the ball across the pitch, the Israeli went down dramatically.

Gallacher denies making an anti-Semitic comment at any time. An Israeli newspaper has alleged that three Rovers players made racist comments towards Berkovitch, but players from both sides have said they heard no such abuse.

The Football Association confirmed that Gallacher will begin a three-game ban for violent conduct this weekend. A spokesman said: "The referee has seen the tape and the result stands."

Noel Gallagher's claim that he will buy Manchester City when he returns from his world tour with Oasis has received a cautious welcome from the fanzine editor Dave Wallace.

Gallagher, an avid Blues fan who grew up in Burnage - two and a half miles from Maine Road - told the *Sunday Morning Post* in Hong Kong he intends to bail out the club with cash from sales of the band's latest album.

Wallace, the editor of *King of the Kippas*, though intrigued by the possibility of a multi-million pound buy-out, admits the Gallagher brothers' penchant for controversy could drag the strugglers to new depths.

"It's a great idea if he's got the money," Wallace said. "I don't think it's a publicity stunt because they've done wonders with the shirt sales. But it's a cautious 'yes'. If they're controversial they could also blow the whole thing apart."

"I think Noel should talk to the fans first and, if they talk to the right people, it might be a good thing for us. If they could come in and move into the background that would be great."

The major shareholder Stephen Boler owns 7.7 million City shares, 24 per cent of the total, with a current price of £1.20 each. There are reports that Boler is willing to sell his stake, but there would probably be further large expenses because of the need to buy new players.

Saib finalises £2.5m transfer to Spurs

TOTTENHAM have completed the £2.5m signing of the Algerian international Mohamed Saib from Spanish side Valencia.

The deal was originally agreed soon after Christian Gross's arrival as Spurs coach last year, but was delayed until yesterday, when the player finalised personal terms.

The midfielder should make his debut in Sunday's game with Bolton at White Hart Lane, a crucial match for both teams as they struggle to avoid relegation.

Raddy Antic, the Atletico Madrid coach, has denied that he is to make a bid for Savo Milosevic, the transfer-listed Aston Villa striker. The former Luton player dismissed as "rubbish" reports that Milosevic had agreed a pre-contract deal to join the Spanish side in the summer.

Antic, who has been in England to watch Villa before next week's UEFA Cup quarter-final first-leg meeting, said: "Milosevic is an interesting kind of

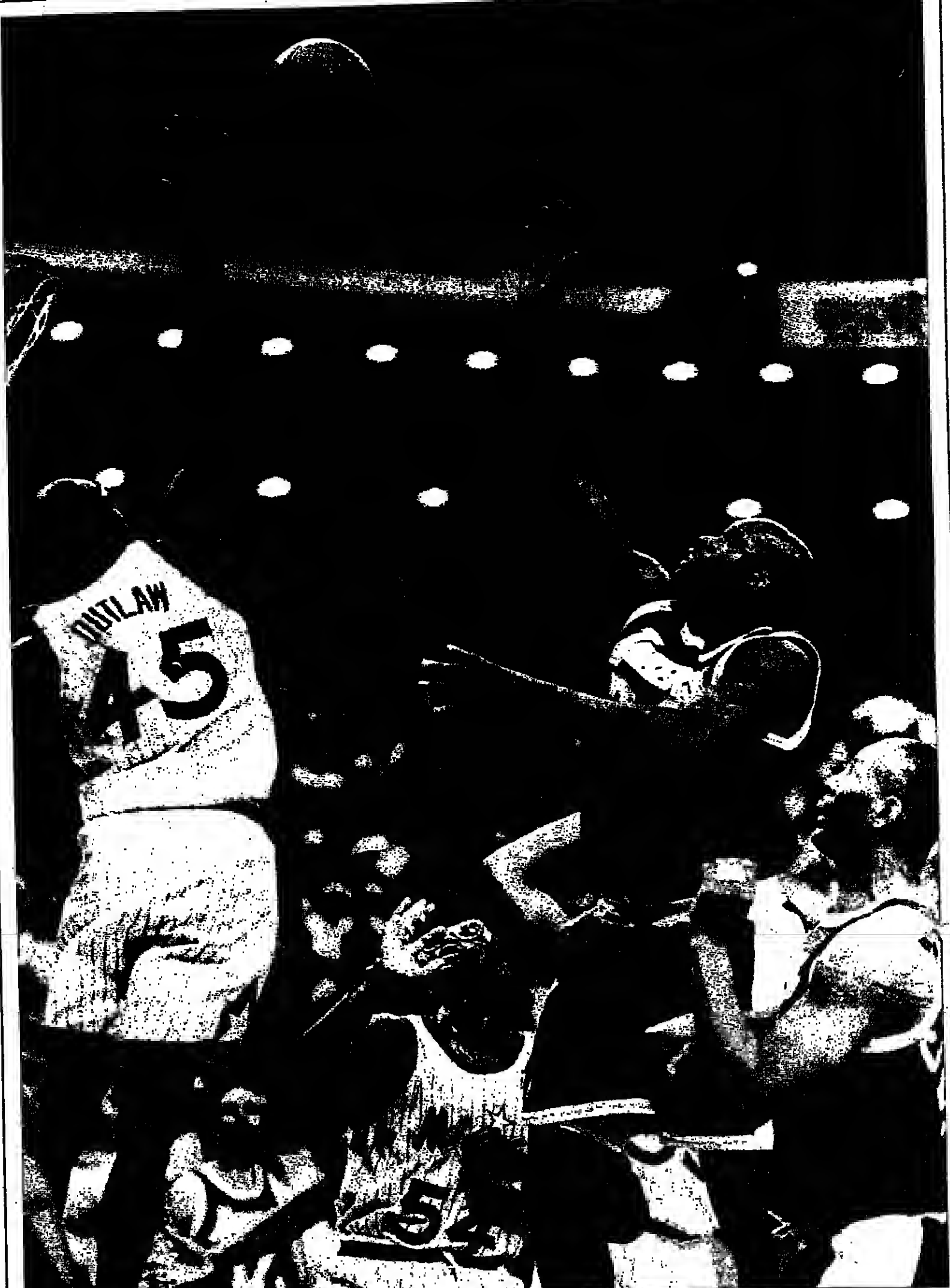
player with a lot of fine skills for a big player, but as things stand at the moment I don't think we have any interest in him."

Uwe Rösler has pledged his immediate future to Manchester City following Joe Royle's arrival at Maine Road.

The German striker, whose two goals at Swindon on Saturday helped give the new manager his first win in charge, has been in dispute over his contract for some time.

His previous manager, Frank Clark, who was sacked by City last week, had virtually given up on the striker, had refused to improve the offer of a new deal, and was expecting him to walk away from the club under the Bosman ruling when his contract runs out in the summer.

But Rösler said yesterday: "At the moment I only have one thing on my mind, and that is to stay up. I want to concentrate on this totally, and when we are in safe waters, then I will then think about my future."



LA Lakers' Shaquille O'Neal sees his shot blocked by the Orlando Magic forward Charles O'Neal in Sunday night's NBA game. O'Neal suffered a frustrating return to Orlando as Lakers lost 96-94 when Nick Anderson landed a three-pointer in the closing seconds. Photograph: Tony Rantz/AFP

Eubank moves up in weight

Boxing

CHRIS EUBANK will move up two weight divisions to challenge Carl Thompson for his World Boxing Organisation cruiserweight title at Manchester's Nynex Arena on 18 April. Eubank had been used to campaigning in the 12 stone super-middleweight division, but this time will not have any weight making problems with the cruiser limit being 13st 8lb.

"I will be coming in with a little podgy stomach which will enable me to soak up the body punches," said Eubank, dressed

in his usual outfit of riding boots, jodhpurs and walking stick. "Losing that weight [last time] wasn't easy."

It will be Eubank's 23rd WBO championship bout, having had four at middleweight and 18 at super-middle, where he reigned from September 1991 until March 1995.

Eubank will, though, be coming off a losing streak, having been beaten by Ireland's Steve Collins (twice) and the Welshman Joe Calzaghe in his last three title engagements.

The Calzaghe defeat came in October in Sheffield when, after being floored in the open-

ing round, he lost the vacant title fight on points.

That was his 50th contest and his chin will need to be up to its normal strength for this 51st against Thompson, who will be fighting in his home city.

Thompson, a former kick-boxing champion, is a big puncher and is in his second reign as WBO titleholder.

He lost it first time around in freak circumstances when he retired against Germany's Ralf Röchigian in Manchester in June, 1995. But Thompson travelled to Germany last October to outpoint Röchigian to regain the title.

New proposal for overtaking lane on hairpin bends

Motor racing

By Derrick Allison

FORMULA One authorities are being urged to take a radical short cut to more entertaining grand prix racing.

The FIA, the sport's governing body, has called for suggestions to make overtaking easier and Patrick Head, the technical director of Williams, has responded by proposing the introduction of a limited-use lane. The plan will be put to a meeting of officials from FIA and the teams later this week.

How Head's suggestion will be received by the FIA and the other teams remains uncertain. Max Mosley, the FIA president, declined to comment yesterday on what the governing body considers "a confidential meeting".

Head explained: "We've been asked for our ideas because overtaking is difficult and you can have one car following

another for 25 laps. I'm suggesting we have a short cut at a hairpin, which drivers can use, say, four times a race. If they use it a fifth time they are disqualified. It's a bit artificial, but then racing is an artificial activity. It would be just like the boost button drivers used to have for overtaking in the turbo days."

Overtaking lane



THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 3542, Tuesday 24 February By Andrew Monday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

ACROSS
1 Got letter ready to post taking note of rush (8)
5 You'd have to be needed to produce this military display (6)
9 Speculate you'll get nothing in the pay increase (8)
10 After work I swallowed a sedative (6)
11 Part of church needing new pictures put back before early autumn (8)
12 Is able to copy a savoury item (6)
14 Follow woman, not disheartened, for 100 metres? (5,5)
18 An inclination for civility one's lacking badly (10)
22 Soak gets right into place of vice by church (6)
23 Plant turns out a tin so (8)

DOWN
1 Occupational therapy rejected after some tennis gets started (4,2)
2 Cite father over primate (6)
3 To die for one is bard (6)
4 Fool professional, entering seedy bar, to indicate displeasure (10)
6 Jibbed at help which involves sailor's letters (8)

7 Reportedly longs to go after wood which consumers might like (3,5)
8 Rate poet badly in light musical work (8)
13 Expert response to a group of detectives is a bitter thing (6,4)
15 Saga about sea rising over island causing widespread illness (8)
16 Cheer up when about to see bullfighter (8)
17 Plate almost came to be served here? (5,3)
19 Show sign of cold knees, say, when going to Sweden (6)
20 Ought to carry burden without hesitation (6)
21 European encounters rising admiration (6)

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CVCP Higher Education Conferences
The voice of UK universities

Lifelong Learning The Role for Universities

Thursday 5 March 1998 • Central London

The Government is due to publish a series of White Papers on Lifelong Learning in early 1998, from the DfEE, Scottish and Welsh Offices. This one day CVCP conference will explore the role for universities in developing and implementing the Government's proposals. Universities already play a significant role in lifelong learning, providing courses at all levels - HND, undergraduates, PhD and CPD. How will the developments announced in the White Papers affect this role? In particular what changes will be needed in universities' management, access, curriculum and funding? How can higher education generally develop its interface and partnership with further education to deliver the flexible learning opportunities that lifelong learning demands?

The conference is for senior managers in higher and further education, academics, careers advisers and training and personnel officers in business and funding organisations.

Speakers include:
Baroness Blackstone, Minister for Education and Employment
Diana Warwick, Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
Professor Bob Fryer, Principal, Northern College (Lifelong Learning Advisory Group)
Dr Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, MD and VC, British Aerospace Virtual University

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